

282 613
L E T T E R S

ON THE
FRENCH NATION,

Considered in its
DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS:

WITH

Many interesting Particulars relating to its Placemen.

BY

Sir ROBERT TALBOT,

Who attended the

Duke of BEDFORD to PARIS in 1762.

TRANSLATED from the FRENCH.

VOLUME I.

*He who would cover the faults of administration with
the veil of silence, acts in opposition to the good of
mankind.*

HELVETIUS de l'Esprit.

Disc. IV. Chap. 10.

L O N D O N :

Printed for B. WHITE, at HORACE'S HEAD, in FLEET-
STREET.

M DCC LXXI.

THE

OF THE

FRANCIS

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE



OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

T A B L E O F T H E L E T T E R S

CONTAINED IN
The FIRST VOLUME.

LETTER I.	<i>To the Earl of B.</i>	Page 1
----- II.	<i>To the same</i>	9
----- III.	<i>To the Bishop of R. a Peer of England</i>	30
----- IV.	<i>To Mr. Robert S. Al- derman of London</i>	39
----- V.	<i>Mr. Alderman S's an- swer</i>	47
----- VI.	<i>To the Earl of B.</i>	54
----- VII.	<i>To Mr. M. Member of the British Parliament</i>	77
----- VIII.	<i>To Colonel H.</i>	101
----- IX.	<i>To Sir Charles G.</i>	117
----- X.	<i>To Lady Anne S.</i>	127
	LETTER XI.	

LETTER XI.	<i>To the Earl of B.</i>	141
XII.	<i>To the Bishop of R. inclosing a Letter from Mr. Abbé N. Doctor of the Sorbonne, to M. le Franc, and another from Father le Franc, an Ex-Jesuit, to the Marquess of N.</i>	156
XIII.	<i>To Mr. James N. Merchant in London</i>	178
XIV.	<i>To Sir Arthur P. Justice of Peace in Devonshire</i>	195
XV.	<i>To the Earl of B. on the Finances</i>	213
XVI.	<i>To the Earl of S. on Ministers and Secretaries of State</i>	282
XVII.	<i>Conclusion of the foregoing</i>	307

THE
EDITOR
TO THE
PUBLIC.

I WILL not amuse my Readers with conjectures and suppositions concerning Sir *Robert Talbot*. If the observations are good, they will care little about the observer; if not, they will care still less. It appears by his Letters, that he arrived at *Paris* with the Duke of *Bedford*, and that he went back to *London* soon after the signing the Preliminaries in 1762. He returned to *Paris* towards the end of 1764, and the Letters which he wrote during this second residence came into my hands by the same means as those of the first. There are enough of them to make several volumes like these two; and I

VOL. I.

A

make

make no doubt but that the Public will receive them with pleasure rather soon than late. But my situation and health will not suffer me to promise them at any fixed time. This makes me apprehensive that some ignorant and knavish scribbler may annex a continuation of his own to these small volumes, and throw on me the hatred and contempt due to his satire and licentiousness. I therefore treat the Public to allow me beforehand to protest, as spurious, against any other volumes which are not authenticated by me.

A LETTER, which I have received from *Paris*, will give a less suspicious account of the volumes now published than any which could be given by me. It may, I think, serve instead of a Preface. The following is an exact copy of the whole.

“ *Paris*, 16 September, 1765.

“ I SHOULD impose upon you, Sir, if I left you in doubt as to the sentence which the Intendants of our Press will pass on the Letters of your judicious *Englishman*. Look upon the Order to keep them *incognito* throughout the Kingdom as already received. Sir *Robert Talbot* has certainly some useful reflections on the internal and external policy of the two States. He is well acquainted with their strength, their finances,
and

and their commerce. If he be mistaken, and that sometimes happens, it is without prejudice to his integrity, and is merely owing to his viewing only one face of an object which has many. He is exact on the manners, which he always considers as a Statesman ought to consider them, that is, as they relate to civil society. He is free from acrimony and passion, and even from singularity, in matters of religion; which is no small merit in this philosophical age. He is strongly for maintaining the constitution of States, whatever it be, deeming it like a contract, which cannot be altered without the consent of the parties that made it, or by an authority that is superior to them. This way of thinking is that of a practical politician, who, perceiving the impossibility of a perfect legislation, is persuaded that there are none of which able Governors may not avail themselves for the good of the people where they are established. I love to hear him discourse in favour of Monarchy, at the same time that he plainly shews a preference in his affection for the mixed Government of his own country. I discover the man of judgment in the confession which he makes, that the latter may not be perfectly good. Sir Robert is as much a stranger to the cringing timidity of the courtier, as he is to the licentiousness

licentiousness which the lover of liberty often mistakes for courage. He shews great regard for the Court and the Ministry, for the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Magistracy. But when he is engaged in particular discussions, each individual is, in his eyes, no more than a man, and he gives him blame or praise according as he appears to deserve the one or the other. He judges placemen with inflexibility. But he only considers them in their public life, which is the right of every honest man, who, from the general sentiments of humanity, must partake with a whole people their contempt, or respect, for those who have contributed to their welfare, or their misery. The panegyrist and the satirist may search into the private life of a celebrated man, to discover some virtues or faults in the recesses of his family, where he keeps them concealed. The former would varnish over ignorance and inattention; the latter would throw great talents into shade. The one expects that we should discover in † *Chamillard*, and the like, the most agree-

† ["A favourite of Madam *Maintenon*, made by her interest Super-intendant of the Finances in 1698, and Secretary at War in 1701. He was no politician, no warrior, nor even well versed in the public revenues." *Voltaire*.]

able commercial Minister; the other would wish to shew you in * *Maurice of Saxony* only the drunkard and debauchee. Sir *Robert Talbot* is not an observer of this kind; place-men seem to him like *Janus's*, one of whose faces is always exposed to persons who will study it for the public advantage. Almost every one whom he praises will appear praiseworthy, almost every one whom he blames will appear blameable, to honest and sensible men.

“ You see, Sir, that I know how to rate your *Englishman* at his full value. However, if I was one from whom you must demand a passport for him, I believe, I should refuse to dispatch it at my Office. You will not think me wrong, if you observe that the prohibition of your book, will be a kind of emollient to readers whose opinion ought to be valued, and if you apply to yourself some of Sir *Robert's* observations. According to him, we lose sight of our men of distinction as soon as they are out of place. All *France* is then pretty indifferent as to what may be said of them. But their families and their successors

* [The famous Marshal *Saxe*, so victorious at the head of the *French* armies in the war of 1741.]

cannot

cannot but be deeply sensible of the reflections that are thrown on them. The honest and bold Author of *L'Esprit* says †, *There is no Visir who does not take his own interest for the interest of the nation, who does not maintain, without knowing it, that to humble his pride is to insult the public, and to blame his conduct, how cautiously soever, is to raise a disturbance in the State.*

“SIR Robert affirms, as a certainty, that every thing with us is matter of fashion, that is, that we rush furiously into all our irregularities, and that this heat is the sure cause of our ready inconstancy. We therefore have no need of a reprimand to correct us; that must come of itself, and so much the sooner, as the torrent has not met with dykes. Your *Englishman* reasons against our Parliaments, and that is not the fashion. Besides, he reasons too strongly against those august Assemblies, and though the Court knows a hundred times more of that subject than he does, yet it would think that he had said a hundred times too much, though he had said a hundred times less. As he himself very justly observes, the Court must punish if it seemed

† In Discourse IV, Chap. 10.

to hear; and very often it will seem not to hear. You will say, that it is dangerous to let false opinions take root in the minds of the people. Nothing is more true: thus the Court was not displeased with the carabineers who fired their pistols at the Gentlemen of the Parliament without its consent. If you are so well inclined as to take the affair on yourself in opposition to the parties concerned, leave your *Englishman* to make his way in the world as well as he can. He does not require a passport to be well received by the good, and it is proper that you should keep him above the ill-humour of the prejudiced. His Letters, after all, are neither the Pastoral Letters of a Bishop, nor an Apology for the Jesuits. The Attorney-General is too able a man to indict them before the Chambers. The Members not having yet prevailed on us to revere their *Index a la Romaine*; it will be said, that they only publish the writings, which, they think themselves obliged to declare, deserve to be burned. The Letters of Sir *Robert Talbot* are argumentative. Before they are stigmatised by an arrêt, a motive should be assigned for their condemnation. Otherwise, we shall laugh at the burners and the burning.

“SERIOUSLY,

x THE EDITOR

“SERIOUSLY, I shall be sorry if the refusal of the licence should make you keep your manuscript by you. Its publication may be productive of very good effects: I have observed, that, in every country, the first shoots of reformation have sprung from writings which men affected to despise. What is no longer new, ceases to be singular, and to seem ridiculous. We are now familiarised to the tone which the Parliaments have assumed; we take it for their natural tone; and perhaps there remain but few enlightened *Frenchmen* who still deny that they are right in not receding from it. Formerly, it was quite otherwise: I myself, who am now writing to you, was one of those who were rash enough to pretend that the Sovereign Courts had need of all their good intention to procure them pardon. They who have thought like me, will see, with pleasure, that the opinion, with which they at present reproach themselves as an error, was probable, that a reasoning *Englishman* has even thought it the only one that was true. In short, the questions which Sir *Robert* discusses concerning the Parliaments are only a very small part of your compilation, which in general may be as well received by all *France* as any work of the kind. The *Christian Je-*
suit

ſuit is an intercolutor full of ſenſe and genius. The two *Solitaries* promiſe moſt curious diſquiſitions for the enſuing part of theſe Letters, in which, without doubt, they have inſerted more of their own than in this. The fragments of our Hiſtory are entirely new; at leaſt, as to their form. *Marſhal de Belle-iſle*, coarſely daubed in the *Teſtament of Alberoni*, is painted from the life, and with truth, by your *Engliſhman*. It will be ſaid, that Sir *Robert* divined the King's order forbidding us to compoſe or read any projects about the Finances. He ſpeaks intelligently of that immenſe department, and if I am not much miſtaken, his ideas and arguments on that ſubject put to rout our new profeſſors of ſpeculative Finance. I could have wiſhed to have found in the Letters of this firſt reſidence the obſervations which you mention on the miſery of the people. The little which you tell me of them beſpeaks a politician who has ſtudied man, who knows him, and loves him, without weakneſs, and without prejudice. The good genius of *France* could not diſcourſe better on the education of the fair-ſex. The ſlighteſt Letters have their beauties. Why have not you a little of our vanity on the eſteem in which foreigners hold us and our language?

language? The certainty of being applauded and thanked by them would make you neglect the perusal of the people, and the licence which is only for them. Dismiss your *Englishman* on my credit, and have no worse an opinion, than he has, of those many *Frenchmen* whom he styles *such as they should be*. Despise such others as are incapable of forming a judgment, by their own taste, of any solid reading, before the cabal has valued the work. I hope you will reckon me one of the first in returning that perfect esteem, with which, &c."

I AGREE in opinion with the writer of this Letter; and I shall not think the worse of Sir Robert Talbot's, though some Gentlemen of the Parliament, more warm as to the present times than cool as to the history of the past, should think they deserved to be burned. I have an excellent memory; and I must, from my conscience, say, with our *Englishman*, that, much as I have studied the Government of *France*, I never met with the least trace of *the Classes of a Parliament of the Kingdom*†.

† See p. 98, 9.

If therefore I have been indiscreet in not retrenching what the Author has said on that subject, it may well be ascribed to my ignorance; but it would be unjust to impute it to me as a crime.

N. B. *The Notes, &c. inclosed within books [] are added by the Translator.*

[To give the *English* reader a clear idea of the amount of the *French* revenues, debts, expences, &c. mentioned in the following work, it may be proper to add, that a livre is at present worth ten pence half-penny, that twelve deniers make a sol, and twenty sols a livre, that a *French* crown is now worth five shillings and three-pence *English*, and a louis d'or is four crowns, or a guinea sterling.]

ERRATA in VOL. I.

Page	xi.	Line	1.	For <i>intercoluter</i> read <i>interlocutor</i> .
—	xii.	—	19.	— <i>deserved</i> — <i>deserve</i> .
—	55.	—	1.	— <i>flowingly</i> — <i>flowently</i> .
—	58.	—	the last	(Note) for 1704 read 1708.
—	178.	—	8.	for <i>genious</i> read <i>genius</i> .
—	182.	—	8.	— <i>corporation</i> — <i>corporations</i> .
—	225.	—	16.	— <i>fine</i> — <i>refused</i> .
—	239.	—	19.	— <i>then</i> — <i>iban</i> .
—	299.	—	29.	(Note) for now <i>Prime Minister of France</i> , read <i>father to the present Prime Minister of France</i> .

LETTERS

LETTERS
OF
Sir ROBERT TALBOT.

LETTER I. *

TO THE EARL OF B.

What the Author promises himself from his journey. How the Duke of Bedford's attendants are caressed at Paris. Malicious politeness of the French. Credulity of the English. Return of both to their natural disposition. Idea of modish trifling. That the French of the present age are very different from their ancestors.

MY LORD,

THE *French* are less rigorous than we are on the laws of war. Before I began the letter which I have now the honour

* [The Duke of Bedford (then Lord Privy-Seal) with a numerous retinue, landed at Calais, as Minister-Plenipotentiary from England, September 8, 1762. This letter must therefore be dated some time in that month. He was received at Paris with the greatest acclamations.]

VOL. I. B tions

to write to you, I made diligent enquiry whether the *French* Ministry would not lay an embargo on my correspondence with *England*; and I received for answer that "as it was not stipulated in our passports that we should remain at *Paris* with our eyes shut and our ears stopped, it was supposed that we were at liberty to see and to hear there as much as possible, and to communicate it to whomever we pleased." Whether this reply be conformable, or not, to the rules of prudence, it comes from persons who behave to us without disguise. Whether they imagine they shall be gainers on a better acquaintance, I am as yet at a loss to know. But it shall not be my fault, my Lord, if I do not know them, and make you know them, as well as they can be known. I will neglect nothing that can enable me to make my journey in every respect advantageous to you,

tions ever known, and was conducted into that city by four hundred of the *French* King's Household-Troops.

The Duke de *Nivernois*, Minister-Plenipotentiary from *France*, arrived at *London*, Sept. 12.

The Duke of *Newcastle* had resigned his office of First Lord of the Treasury, May 26, in which he was succeeded by the Earl of *Bute*. The Earl of *Egremont* and Mr. *Grenville* were, at that time, Secretaries of State, Sir *Francis Dashwood*, (now Lord *le Despencer*) Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Earl of *Halifax* First Lord of the Admiralty.]

and

and to penetrate into the internal system of this vast kingdom as much as you yourself could have done, if it had been possible for you to have indulged your curiosity with the visit. Thanks to your extensive reading, I have nothing to tell you that has been written and published before. All that you wish from my respectful attachment, is, that I should set before you the Court of *France*, and the *French Nation*, such as they are in circumstances altogether new to this reign. I will endeavour therefore to draw the real genius and character of the different ranks of people, the disposition, the talents, the passions of it's Placemen. I will study, for your information, the resources, whether good or bad, which now give to the whole machine of government one direction rather than another. I will examine, like a mechanic, the machine itself, what we are allowed to hope, and what we have left to fear, either at or after the splendid exhibition which for six years past we have given to *Europe*.

THE *Incognito* in which we proposed to remain till the very opening of the negotiation has not taken place. The Court and the People, who are equally desirous of peace, imagine that a Nobleman of the Duke of *Bedford's* rank would not have accepted the embassy, if he had not been certain of suc-

ceeding better than Mr. *Stanley* *. Before my Lord-Duke arrived at *Paris*, he was there esteemed the bearer of a reconciliation between the two Crowns. This prepossession in our favour freed us at once from all restraints. Under the shelter of the Ambassador's reputation, every *Englishman*, of a rank to be taken for one of his train, is viewed with complacency. We are admitted with ease into the best company, and there meet with a distinguished welcome. We were at first a little fatigued with the weak curiosity of the multitude (for here, as with us, the Upper-House has it's populace.) But there is no kind of politeness, no kind of assiduity, which persons of rank have not shewn, to engage us at once with their endearing friendship. Not one word on the *British* Nation and Government but what tended to the glory of *Great-Britain*, not one reflection on our arms but what turned to the advantage of our Ministers and Troops. We were praised with such delicacy, and with such a specious appearance of truth, that it was almost impossible for us not to believe, that

* [This Minister, after four months ineffectual negotiation at the Court of *France*, was recalled in *October* 1761. M. *Buffy*, the *French* Minister at *London*, returned at the same time. Mr. *Pitt* was then Secretary of State.]

nothing more was intended than to do us justice; the most refined among us were deceived by it. We have often waited with a kind of impatience for the separation of the company, that we might be at liberty to laugh, without indecency, at the ignorance* and credulity of those illustrious *Parisians*, who extolled us as the only free, rich, and powerful nation.

THE illusion, my Lord, did not continue long. In about a week, when they supposed we were familiarised to good company, and were able to understand raillery on our affairs, they spoke to us without disguise. We were at first attacked on our literature, which these people, much better qualified for enjoyment than erudition, blackened with no less wit than complaisance. We were forced to content ourselves with referring the question to more competent judges, the greatest scholar among us having scarce his supplies from *Cambridge* and *Oxford*, which are contra-

* They who are acquainted with the cabals and corruption at Court and in Parliament, who have a clear idea of the councils of the one, and of the debates of the other, who have any knowledge of the public funds, of the Bank, the Exchequer, and the currency of paper-money, in *England*, cannot refrain from laughter at seeing us, on the credit of M. *de Montesquieu*, taking what the *British* Government ought to be for what it is.

band here. They afterwards proceeded to our government. Our liberty and our wealth were attacked on all sides with so much address and sagacity, that we could not defend our dear country, and our useful prejudices concerning it, without giving the rudest shocks to truth. These men whom we suppose so trifling, have their *Literati*, as well as the *Chinese*, persons who reserve to themselves a peculiar mode of thinking, different almost in every respect from that of the rest of the nation. These are persons who have studied our political and civil constitution; and the vivacity, which distinguishes them among the learned of the rest of *Europe*, has enabled them to seize, with a surprising penetration, the contrast which prevails among us between right and fact, the name and the thing. They regard the excellence of the government of *England* as they do the infallibility of the court of *Rome*, which they abandon to the people.

I HAVE met with many of my old acquaintance, who, according to the *French* custom, have procured me more. They are not all persons of equal merit, but every one has a merit of his own. They all seem to be on their guard, so as to appear to me only in the light that is most advantageous to them: this is the sole instance in which I
can

can perceive that their country is at war with mine. Levity *, which is now more than ever the characteristic of the nation, is to the *French* who are above the common rank a masque like that of the *Venetian* Senators during the Carnival. The disguise of these *Italian* Sages is only for the people ; my *Frenchmen* wear theirs only for the women. These real Governesses of the kingdom having made it the fashion to busy themselves in trifles, whoever would be thought of any consequence must seem to be engrossed by them. Perhaps my true masques are at present less numerous than they were in former ages. This is the effect of a revolution in manners as singular in its rapidity as in its causes. I will do myself the honour, my Lord, to entertain you with it, when I have made myself master of the subject ; in the mean time, you may be assured, that the *French* of *Lewis XV's* reign have scarce more resemblance to the *French* of *Henry IV's*, than the *English* of *James I's* reign have to those of *George III's*.

You will please, however, always to except the small circle of scholars. Certain it

* [*Friivolité*. No *English* word is exactly adequate to the idea conveyed by this expression, which often occurs in modern *French*, unless we naturalise the substantive *frivolousness*, as we have the adjective *frivolous*.]

is, that the weakness of the *British* empire is as well known at *Paris* and *Versailles*, as its strength seems to have been known at *Westminster*; and that if the *French* Ministry do not avail themselves, for our destruction, of the means with which our internal state can furnish them, it is not for want of having at hand men who have studied the operation. I have inclosed one of the plans, which the allurements of flattery induced one of these formidable speculatists to disclose to me. By thus stealing a forced march on our enemy in a private conversation, you may make an estimate how much ground might be gained, if it was employed by ministers. As for telling you why the Court, who well know that we leave no stone unturned to ruin the kingdom, refuse to make reprisals, that is impossible for me to do at present. I may perhaps some time hence, when I have enquired the solution of this riddle at *Paris*, where the liberty of conversing on the Government is as great, though often more dangerous, than at *London*.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Visit to the office for foreign affairs. Who are the Minister's three chief Clerks in that department. What are their talents, and their peculiar turn of mind. Portrait of the Duke de Choiseuil. Observations on the jealousy with which the favourites of Kings are regarded. Reform introduced by the Duke in the foreign office. Who are the Counts de Choiseuil and de Stainville. Digression on the late Marshal-Duke de Belleisle.

MY LORD,

I HAVE had occasion to appear at the office for foreign affairs, on account of a disputed passport for some Gentlemen who are going to *Turin*. I went first, and merely by way of compliment, to M. *de Buffy*, for whom every good *Englishman* has much esteem but little * love, since, to be more

* Many *Englishmen* affect to believe, that at the beginning of the negotiation of Mess. *de Buffy* and *Stanley*, the *French* Minister had in reserve the unexpected interposition of *Spain* to retard the conclusion of the treaty; and that the chief object of his mission was to irritate and force the Partisans of Peace to discover themselves.

cunning than our last Ministry, he did not fail to think *Spain* as powerful as she supposed herself. I found him just what we knew him at *London*, the most polished Courtier, a Statesman in fact the most reserved, and in appearance the most open, in short, the most elegant speaker that *Versailles* can form. He expressed himself to me in the most obliging manner possible. But I guessed, from the glance of his penetrating eye, that he took delight in amusing me by amusing himself. I went from his office to that of M. *Gaudin*, who has for his department the cash of the Ministry, and the passports. These chief Clerks of the Minister are much more in the secret of affairs than our Under-Secretaries of State. Grown old in steering, they sometimes direct the helm more than the Pilot who has the name of Commander. I asked a favour of M. *Gaudin*, and he received me better than an underling of the Treasury, to whom I had presented a lucrative speculation, would at *London*. This engaging politeness is not the effect of bad success in war. I imagine that the men of rank, who from time to time have been at the head of this office, have given it this turn, the influence of which is greater than can be expressed, and it were much to be wished that we would not banish it from our offices

offices as the growth of *France*. The conversation of this *M. Gaudin* is easy, though intelligent. Add to this an harmonious tone of voice, a modest assurance, and a complaisance which denotes great gentleness of temper and closeness of thinking. I have scarce known any man who promised to be so persuasive a negociator. He discussed with the utmost clearness many general principles of the politics of the age; but he had equal address to elude the application. I tried in vain every method to induce him to enter with me into some particulars of the present crisis. After more than an hour's conversation, he almost made me believe that I had brought him some news, from *Paris*, of the Court and of his own office. A foreigner, who spoke *English* as I speak *French*, would not have had a quarter of an hour's conversation with the first Subalterns of the *Cockpit* and of *Whitehall*, without drawing from them, at least by their confused answers and mysterious air, the secrets of state and of the nation. A practical Politician of this country knows how to talk in a trifling strain, which you hope every moment will betray him into some indiscretion. I compare him to an experienced Philosopher, who diverts himself with the greedy curiosity of a learner. He fixes his scholar's attention on slight phænomena,

phænomena, he makes him believe that he is instructed, and in fact he is only amused. If you were constantly to frequent the offices of the *French* Ministry for a twelvemonth, you would scarce bring away news enough to fill a daily paper. This, my Lord, without doubt is more to be valued than the intimacy of persons about the Court whom the News-writers produce as their oracles and their vouchers. This extreme discretion is ascribed to Cardinal *de Fleury*, who, annexing importance to every thing, made the most difficult talent, that of concealment, habitual, and that of discovery the most dangerous, to all who were employed under his direction. Thus we may account for many of the faults of men in place. I left M. *Gaudin* with that kind of vexation which a man feels on finding another more cunning than himself.

THE Abbé *de la Ville*, the other chief Clerk for foreign affairs, is no stranger to your Lordship by reputation. You know, that he resided in *Holland* as Minister of *France* from 1744 to 1746. The wise and malicious reply which he made *extempore* to the *Dutch*, whom we had urged to remonstrate against the re-establishment of *Dunkirk*, is still remembered at the *Hague*. "The works, *said he*, which the King "my Master is raising at *Dunkirk*, are merely "for the security of the place, the possession
" of

“ of which the treaty of *Utrecht* itself insures
“ to his Majesty. However, if the Re-
“ public take umbrage at them, it is in her
“ own power to put an end to them. Let
“ their High-Mightinesses place in *Dunkirk*
“ a garrison of eight or ten thousand men of
“ their troops. The King will entrust to
“ them the preservation of that key of *Flan-*
“ *ders*, and will receive that guaranty without
“ scruple.” The *Dutch*, among whom the
ferment for the re-establishment of the Stadt-
holdership was increasing, were too wise to
act a part which would have fixed them in
the neutrality with which they began to be
much embarrassed; and they shut their eyes
to the works of *Dunkirk*.

THE Abbé has a great share in the confidence of the Duke *de Choiseul*, as to what regards foreign affairs. This share he enjoys in a distinguished degree. He is one of those laborious men whom the *French* call *culs de plomb*, because, when once seated at their desk, they seem unable to rise out of their chair. He is the oracle of the Envoys who reside at the courts which are in his department. Jokers style him their house-steward, “ because he sends them (say they,) dishes just ready to be served to table.” He was himself the artificer of his fortune. Having passed his early years among the Jesuits, he found

found himself in the world beyond the age of maturity without any establishment. The Marquess *de Fenelon*, Ambassador in *Holland*, had entrusted to him the education of his sons; and contented with the small emoluments of his laborious office, the Abbé seemed to limit his ambition to a country living, with which his Patron could not fail, one time or other, to reward his services. The war having rendered the functions of the Marquess more fatiguing, he wished for a man in whom he could confide, and on whom he might devolve some part of his labour. Just as he was going to write to *Paris* to desire that such a one might be sought, he mentioned it to the Marchioness his wife, who convinced him that he had in his family the man he wanted. The Abbé soon confirmed the opinion which the Marquess was pleased to form of him; and when that Minister demanded his recall to serve in his rank of Lieutenant-General in the army *,

* [In consequence of this military appointment, the Marquess served three campaigns in the Low-Countries, and was killed in 1746 at the battle of *Liege*. " He " was brought up, *says Voltaire*, under the care of his " Uncle, the immortal Archbishop of *Cambray*, and " possessed all his virtues, though in a character quite " different. Twenty years embassy in *Holland* did not " extinguish a military ardor and a thirst for glory, " which cost him his life. Having been wounded in " the

he prevailed with the Court not to replace him with a Minister of the same title, till the Abbé had been acknowledged as his agent, or *Chargé d'Affaires*. This was so well approved, that, a few months after, he had the rank given him of Minister. During his retirement in *Holland*, in 1746, he had no recommendation at *Versailles* but that of his merit, a kind of recommendation which is in all courts of the same alloy; scarce any attention was paid him. Perhaps he would have been obliged to resume his former occupation, if M. *Rouillé* being placed at the head of foreign affairs had not been a man of too much honour to have an aversion for an able subaltern. I know not who brought him acquainted with the Abbé; he made choice of him, and was pleased with him. His successors adopted his choice; and M. *de la Ville* has not left the office. He has so much the reputation of being made for his place, that if the Minister of that department be the master of it, he will conclude by growing old in it. In the present junc-

“ the foot forty years before, and scarce able to walk,
 “ he rushed on the entrenchments of the enemy on
 “ horseback: he sought death, and he found it. His
 “ extraordinary piety augmented his intrepidity: he
 “ thought that the most pleasing action in the sight of
 “ God was to die for his Sovereign.”

Age of Lewis XV. ch. 8.]
 ture,

ture, the Abbé is to you, my Lord, one of the chief personages in the Court of *France*, though he is reckoned as nothing by the Courtiers. He is a man equally qualified for the cabinet and for negociation. But his talents for the latter are of a singular kind. His air is frigid, and even austere. His voice is strong, and perhaps rough, his discourse extremely concise. You would think him a Statesman of ancient *Sparta*. He has a downcast look, a black beard, a brown complexion, and thick eye-brows. One may very easily be deceived by such a figure. The shortness of his sight not allowing him to learn much from physiognomy, he seldom fixes his eyes on those to whom he speaks; which prevents their discovering in his looks the degree of sincerity that appears in what he says, or the impression that is made on him by the reply. With such an antagonist, a man of the greatest eloquence loses all his advantages; he is continually in danger of committing a fault, either on the offensive, or the defensive.

I HAVE seen the Duke and the Count *de Choiseul*, as well as the other Ministers who are Secretaries of State. But this was just as the country people, who come to *Versailles*, see the King and the Royal Family. In other junctures I should not have scrupled
to

to have been introduced to those chief Ministers, who are very easy of access, especially to foreigners.

THE Duke has a fine eye, which discovers much fire and penetration. His countenance is open and sprightly. Though he came out of his closet, I did not observe in him that air of business and perplexity by which Ministers of State affect to be distinguished. It is said, that he does business with great ease, that he apprehends the force of an argument with wonderful sagacity, and espouses his side of the question with the utmost grace and resolution. Some particulars were told me which do him honour, and which must give my Lord-Duke good hopes concerning his important negotiation. The Duke *de Choiseul's* enemies, Politicians of the old School, who suppose that the parade and slowness of deliberations add dignity to a Minister's operations, reproach him for determining too hastily, and call his quickness inconsiderate. There are no virtues, or good qualities, which jealousy and hatred cannot blacken. Whatever they may impute to him, it is unanimously allowed, that the Duke possesses, in an eminent degree, that firmness which is essential to a Minister in a State wholly monarchical; and that, as well by temper as by conviction, his principle is, that
the

the regal authority is more endangered by softening and retracting, than by mistaking. Besides, he makes the most of his time, chusing rather to read memorials than to give audiences. He is ready and exact in his answers; and he writes them with his own hand, if the business be of the least importance.

As to his character, all agree to speak well of him. He is a man of quality, who cannot be moved by little connections, which generally affect a Minister who is himself astonished at his elevation. The House of *Choiseul* is one of the noblest in the kingdom. It is of the Dutchy of *Burgundy*. A younger brother, settling in *Lorraine*, under the name of *Stainville*, was the origin of a branch which ended there, about a century ago, in the person of the Master of the Horse to Duke *Charles IV*. He left his estate to another younger Brother of *Burgundy*, whom he ordered to take his name, appointing him his heir and residuary legatee. From this stock sprung the branch of *Choiseul-Stainville*, of which is the Duke. The other branches bear the names of *Choiseul-Beaupré*, *Choiseul-Praslin*, &c.

LEWIS XIV having taken his Ministers, during all his long reign, from the Third-Estate, it was natural for a man of quality to suppose that he did honour to that place.

place. The Duke *de Choiseul* seems to think, that he is by birth above it, which adds to his labour a tincture of patriotism, and to his conduct an air of grandeur, which help to defend him from envy and jealousy. Tho' a Statesman, he has nevertheless improved his private fortune as a military man and a courtier. He had the government of *Tou-raine*, on the death of the Count *de Charolois*, Prince of the Blood, of the House of *Condé*. He is in treaty with the Count *d'Eu*, a legitimated Prince, for his post of Colonel-General of the *Swiss*. Many of his relations are invested with some of the best Bishopricks in *France*. On being placed at the head of the offices of war and of the marine, he procured one of his Cousins to succeed him in the department of foreign affairs, which he quitted*. Lastly, he has obtained a rich Heiress in marriage for the Count *de Stainville*, his brother. All this constitutes the grievances of his enemies; as if a true Nobleman had not a right to pretend to the

* [The Duke continued in his high office till the beginning of the present year 1771, when he was displaced and banished, by the intrigues of Madam *Barré*. *Voltaire*, in his *Age of Lewis XV*, says, "he is a man of an active and bold genius, but prudent, having views as great as those of Marshal *Belleisle*, with more spirit."]

highest degree of fortune in a Monarchy where there is only one order of Nobility; as if a man of quality, distinguished from others by his love and esteem for his King, ought to hesitate in preferring, in his recommendations to his Majesty for benefices and employments of trust, such of his relations as he deems capable of filling with propriety those places which are destined for the Nobility; as if it were of importance to the public welfare into what noble family a rich Heiress carries her large fortune. In all times, my Lord, and in all countries, the object of the Prince's favour is an object of jealousy. Men are always, and in all places, the same. The famous Cardinal *de Retz*, Coadjutor, and afterwards Archbishop, of *Paris*, was descended from the *Italians* who followed *Catherine de Medicis* into *France*, and who there attained to the highest honours and great riches, by the favour of that Princess, whose memory is abhorred by the *French*. Nevertheless, the Cardinal *de Retz*, a Statesman of great penetration, reproached Cardinal *Mazarin* for his *Italian* origin; and, certain of being applauded in Parliament, he there maintained, that the condition of Foreigner ought to exclude that Minister from the employments and management of the affairs of the kingdom. They who exclaim
the

the most loudly in courts against favourites of either sex, are those whose ancestors were indebted for their fortune either to the favour of the Prince, or to connections which favourites of either sex would gladly introduce into their families. The Dutchess of *Marlborough* so entirely forgot how *Sarah Jennings* had been so highly exalted, that she could not conceive how Mrs. *Masham* dared to vye with her. It was, I think, Queen *Christina*, who said very justly of the haughty looks of some old Lords, "that men have no value at court, but what the Prince gives them; that an actual favourite is as much superior to a descendant of old favourites as the present is superior to the past; and (the reverse of Nobility,) that the favour of the Sovereign confers no consequence but only when it is recent." These notions must necessarily have succeeded in *France* where there are now so few titled families that have their titles any where but in the archives of the court. When we recollect how far, and with what rapidity, the favour of *Lewis XIII.* pushed the fortune of *Luynes* and his two Brothers, we admire the moderation of those who have been in the good graces of his two successors. The *Luynes's* *, without

* Sir *Robert* is mistaken. The eldest *Luynes* was placed

being born noble, married into sovereign houses, and before their bearing arms, they were invested with the chief military offices of the crown. The eldest married a Princess of *Lorraine*, and was Constable of *France* at the age of twenty-two, in preference to old *Lesdiguières*, who had so well deserved that first employment of the kingdom. The second married a Princess of the House of *Luxembourg*, whose name he took; and was Marshal of *France* soon after his Brother had been made Constable. The third espoused the rich Heiress of *Pequigny*, and was Marshal of *France* at the same time with his Brother. The favour of the Regent, *Mary de Medicis*, made the famous *Concini* soar as high, a private Gentleman of *Florence*, better known by the name of Marshal *d'Ancre*. The Duke *d'Epemon*, reckoned in the reign

placed about *Lewis XIII.* with the young people who were to afford him amusement. It is not likely, that he would have been introduced there, if his birth had not been noble. All Genealogists agree in styling him of the House of *Alberti* in *Italy*. The President *de Novion*, in his famous Memoir to the Duke-Regent concerning the Dukes and Peers, contents himself with reproaching the two younger Brothers for having had only one cloak between them both, while they were at college. *M. de Luynes* is stigmatised on account of his birth in the *History of the Mother and the Son* only, a true Satire, ascribed to the Historian *Mexeray*.

of

of *Henry IV.* the greatest and the first Nobleman in *France*, was not generally acknowledged as a Gentleman, when he gained the good graces of *Henry III.* The Duke de *Joyeuse*, whom the same King made his Brother-in-law, and whom he placed at the head of his armies, was of a noble family; but far from rich, and without any title, &c.

THE office for foreign affairs changed its appearance, when *M. de Choiseul* took the management of it. He has established such a method in the funds of this department, that, insufficient as they were, they are become susceptible of savings for the war and the marine. I have been assured, that these savings amount to no less than 4 or 500,000*l.* sterling a year. In fact, they have supplied several armaments and convoys for *America* and the *East-Indies*. But the Duke's enemies are very far from allowing him merit in this oeconomy. They pretend, that the King's Ministers at foreign courts having been reduced to mere necessities, the service has suffered by it; that those Gentlemen have been afraid or disdained to make memorials of their secret and extraordinary charges, and that, in order to save them, they were confined to current expences. I know that a considerable sum, which was left to the discretion of the Ambassadors
in

in *Switzerland*, was withdrawn from them, and that, like the other Ambassadors, they are reduced to their appointments. I do not see, that the state can receive any detriment by it; and the case is the same with many other articles of reformation.

THE Count *de Choiseul*, who is now at the head of the office for foreign affairs, is of the branch of *Choiseul-Praslin*. Your Lordship knows, that he was nominated the only Plenipotentiary at *Augsbourg*, if the congress, appointed to be held in that imperial city, had taken place. Since that, he has been in place so short a time, and the Duke his relation so much overshadows him, that nothing can yet be said of his Ministry that is personal to him. But probably he will not delay to take wing. It is he that is to negotiate with my Lord-Duke*. This will afford him an excellent and singular opportunity of making himself known. He is not a man of punctilio, I am certain. However, he is not accused of bluntness. My Lord-Duke will describe him to your Lordship more at large, and with more precision, than I can.

* [The King, his Master, rewarded his services in this negociation by creating him a Duke and Peer of France by the title of Duke *de Praslin*.]

THE Duke's brother is named the Count *de Stainville*. He came this war out of the military service of *Austria*, where he had a quick rise, into the service of *France*, in which he is Lieutenant-General†. He has the reputation of being a good Officer. But the notion which he entertains, that the *French* army should be put on the same footing as the *German*, creates him enemies. It is thought, however, that the war will not end without his being made Marshal of *France*. If I were in his place, I do not think I should wish for it. This first military dignity seems likely to become an employment merely honorary, and, as it is in the Empire, less a real office than a title of dismissal, and a consolation for retirement. There were twenty Marshals of *France* on the establishment,

[† As such, this gallant Nobleman had a principal command in the army in *Germany*, and particularly distinguished himself in the action of *Graebenstein*, June 24, 1762, when the *French* being surpris'd in their camp by Prince *Ferdinand*, the Count *de Stainville* preserved their whole army, by throwing himself into the woods of *Wilhelmstahl*, and sacrificing the flower of his infantry to cover their retreat. And on July 23, he also preserved the right of the *French* army, composed chiefly of *Saxons*, commanded by Prince *Xavier*, when, on being attacked by General *Zastrow*, they had retired precipitately over the *Fulda*. On the whole, no *French* General during the war gained more reputation than the Duke *de Choiseul's* brother.]

when M. *de Contades*, Lieutenant-General, commanded the only army which the King had in the field.

A MAN cannot be more completely forgotten than the late Marshal *de Belle-isle* is at Court, of whom your Lordship desires me to speak at large. His memory survived him no longer than was necessary for the King to dispose of his employments. His Funeral Oration was privately pronounced in the Chapel of the Invalids. It is a piece of oratory, which a celebrated Jesuit dared to undertake, and also to publish. If this man, who has been so famous, is sometimes mentioned, it is to turn him into ridicule, or worse. It is affirmed, that a certain great King nicknamed him *Marschal Ink-born*. In fact, he was amazingly fond of writing, and of dictating. *Cæsar* dictating to four Secretaries at once was his hero and his model. To judge by appearances, he improved on the *Roman*, who, we do not find, read at the same time four letters. The able writer who presented to him a good plan in one page of writing would have been in his eyes a much more able writer, if he had blackened twenty sheets of paper. I know a man of a strong imagination, who, when he wanted money, took to his bed, and set down, in letters as long as one's finger, every thing

thing that came into his mind. When he was tired, he closed the packet, and sent it to the Marshal, who measured by the bulk of the volume the esteem in which he held it, and the reward which he assigned it. All with one voice impute to him most of the bad successes of this war, both by sea and land. They insist that it was his desire of directing the operations of a numerous army, which induced the King his master to depart from the tenor of the Treaty of *Versailles*, according to which his Most Christian Majesty might have been excused from the war by land for 24,000 men, or twenty-four millions of livres. They doubt not that his *Britannic* Majesty would have been faithful to his old engagements with the House of *Austria*, in quality of Elector, if the *French* arms had not threatened his Electorate. In short, it is looked upon as certain, that the fear of seeing his department become the second made him traverse in every thing, and every where, the Ministers and the operations of the Marine. They blame him as much for want of discernment as for want of zeal. *Drucourt*, who so badly defended *Louisbourg*, *Redmond*, who suffered us to take and demolish *Cherbourg* before his eyes, the Marshal *de Contades*, so unfortunately famous for his defeat at *Minden*, were, it is said, his

C 2

creatures,

creatures, and patronised by him. Some place also to his account the choice of *Lally*, whose name is for ever recorded in the books of our *East-India* Company; and that of *Marshal de Conflans*, who performed the funeral of the *French* Marine. In a word †, he is charged with almost all the disgraces of the nation.

WITHOUT penetrating into the motive of your Lordship's curiosity concerning this at least singular man, I will collect and send you as much as I possibly can on the subject. You have reason to be dissatisfied with the books and pamphlets in which some obscure and ignorant writers have exhibited him since his death. To deny him genius would be most absurdly unjust. He had it, no doubt, but it was peculiarly turned to intrigue and tricking. He had great suppleness and cunning, with a wonderful address to make himself valued. It was said of the two brothers, that the Chevalier mixed the draught, and that the Marshal sold it. He was a worthy disciple of *Machiavel*, politic without scruple, ambitious without any regard

† [The Original is, "*En un mot, il est en laid Hercule de la France*," &c. which, the Translator frankly owns, he does not understand, and therefore, according to *Horace's* rule, he has omitted it.]

but

but for himself. He adhered strictly to the old system of rivalry between the two houses. He never disposed of his employments according to the new system without regret. His letter, in which he advises Marshal *de Contades* to canton himself in the country of *Hanover*, and to make a desert before him that he might not be approached, affords the strongest proof that he wished not the King his master to take part in the quarrel of *Saxony* and *Austria*. Before his rise, he gained every thing by dint of intriguing and complaisance. After his rise, he carried every thing by haughtiness. Towards his decline, the Court refused him nothing through compassion. He was a weeping Veteran, who referring all the incidents of his life to the service of the King and the State, voluntarily asked a recompence and indemnification for the death of his wife, as well as for the death of his † son. He always said, that he should die of fatigue and chagrin; and he was believed: this it was that kept him in place till his last gasp. I am, &c.

† [The Count *de Gisors*, only son of the Marshal, the glory of the *French* Nobility, who was killed in the battle of *Crevelt*, June 23, 1758, in the 26th year of his age. See Letter IX.]

L E T T E R III.

TO THE BISHOP OF R. A PEER OF ENGLAND †.

Reflections on the ruin of the Society of JESUS, in France, and on the patience of its Members. To what this last may be owing. Criticism on the Pope's behaviour in this affair. What refined policy would have dictated to the Court of Rome. That the causes of the proscription of the Jesuits in France necessarily lead to the extinction of the great religious Orders called Mendicants.

MY LORD,

I SEND you, by his Excellency's Courier, all that has been published here for and against the Jesuits. You will think it amazing, that a body which has been so powerful, should have been so easily overthrown, that it so soon yielded to its adversaries, and that its numerous connections with all the Catholic Courts could not procure it any

† [The Author, or Editor, is not accurate in this appellation, "the Bishops of *England* not being in "strictness held to be Peers of the Realm, but merely "Lords of Parliament." See Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, B. I. Ch. 2. p. 157.]

intercession.

intercession. Your Lordship will think it still more surprising, that this body, which reckoned itself the repository of the sciences and of learning, the diffuser of knowledge throughout the kingdom, should have had none but Fanatics and Dunces for its defenders. The reasons that have been given me, though by no means satisfactory, I shall, however, proceed to mention. The Jesuits assert, that the Chancellor of *France* expressly forbade them to publish any thing in their own defence. They have said this to persons of credit, from whom I heard it; and besides, that that Magistrate had obliged them to withdraw a pamphlet, which they had entrusted to the bookseller *Lambert* in order to be printed. But I immediately asked, how long, and by what prodigy, these Gentlemen have been so obedient to the voice of authority; they, who more than once have not submitted to that of the Pope their sovereign? What sudden revolution induces them humbly to bend beneath the order of a Magistrate, when their very existence is at stake; they, who have always affected to brave the whole Magistracy, when their maintenance only, and often nothing but the reputation of their superiority, were in question? By what enchantment has the zeal of the Jesuits beyond the mountains, of *Germany* and the

C 4

Netherlands,

Netherlands, of those provinces of the kingdom where the Parliaments still protect this terrible Society, been benumbed and silenced? Could it be from a principle of religion that these men, so fertile in reasons and arguments on the frivolous disputes of the Schools, should be dumb to the heaviest and most odious accusations that are brought against them? But there is, I think, in the Epistle of an Apostle, a formal Exhortation to the Disciples of CHRIST, not to suffer themselves to be thought dishonest, nor to make themselves a buckler of patience and silence, except when they were in danger of suffering for the name of CHRIST. Otherwise, who would have suspected the Jesuits of letting themselves be persecuted from a motive of piety?

SOME, my Lord, pretend, that the poor figure made by the Society of JESUS proceeds from its real decline, as well in what relates to learning, as to morals. They say, that their studies are not now the same that they were formerly; that their Members have nothing but the small Literature of College; and that imagining themselves to be still what they were in the last age, they have disdained to have recourse to foreign assistance, and to employ in their defence any pens but their own, who thinking they
had

had said every thing in their Pleas, are reduced to silence. Others maintain, that the General of the Company considered the storm as a sudden gust to which it was expedient to yield, in order to be prepared with all their strength at the return of the calm. Most of those who have the best intelligence, ascribe this wonderful silence to their Chiefs having been privately threatened with being punished, if they made a defence, by the publication of their recent crimes, which would make them execrated by the populace, who as yet only hate them.

I READILY form my opinion out of these four. What has appeared in behalf of the Society, including the Pleas, seems the manufacture of the College: it is mere declamation. The Chancellor, by forbidding them to publish it, could not have done them much wrong. The submission of their Chiefs to the violence of the storm was a sufficient ground for the notion of its short continuance; and it is probable, that the despotic General, thinking to make the Clergy revolt against the Parliaments, might hope to reserve to his subjects the merit of Evangelical Patience taken in the *Romish* sense. But the latter requires particular attention. The Chiefs had a presage of the whole catastrophe. They expected the blow long before

it was given; they formed projects after the dispersion of the Society, of which the sentence was yet in the darkness of futurity: I know a man of credit, to whom the brother of *Montigny*, the principal Solicitor of the Order, spoke of that dispersion, as of an inevitable disgrace, on the 10th of *August*, 1761. Nevertheless, the arrêt of the 6th had only enjoined an examination of the Institute and its Constitutions.

WHAT particularly strikes me in this revolution, for which some former ages had wished in vain, is the remarkable part which the Pope acts in an affair where refined policy assigns him so brilliant a character. The Successor of *Sixtus V* seems to me quite to forget himself. The Grand *Lama* of the Catholics contents himself with disapproving the proceedings of the Parliaments. I should be just as well pleased with a man, who, seeing a house demolishing, whose fall must be attended with the ruin of his own, is quite silent on that demolition. There were, in my opinion, two parts for the Pontiff to have acted, as he cannot but know, that the annihilation of the Jesuits, without his concurrence, threatens with the same fate the whole Monastic Order, which is the support of the *Romish* Church. With all the light which the General receives from his right of requiring
the

the Confession of Penitents among his subjects to be revealed to him, he ought to have examined, whether the ruin of the Jesuits was so determined at the Court of *France*, that the most powerful protection from the Head of the Church could not save them. The less hopes the Holy Father had seen on that side, the more he ought to have thundered, to have stormed, against the Parliaments. The Clergy, secretly supported by the Court, would have made the Edicts of *Rome* regarded in their jurisdiction; and by means of the laudable obstinacy that is natural to them, they would again have induced the people to think better of the Jesuits their clients. I agree with your Lordship, that the excommunications of the *Vatican* can do no execution against the Sages and Scholars who compose the sovereign Courts of *France*. But please to recollect, that *Henry IV*, who certainly prized them at their full value, *suffered himself to be scourged by an Ambassador*, according to the *Huguenots* his contemporaries, in order to be delivered from their effects. Magistrates cease to exist as soon as they lose the esteem and veneration of the people, and in order to preserve their existence, they must, with them, submit to the yoke which the people respect and love. The Parliament of *Paris* gravely issues an arrêt, in a full assembly
of

of all the Chambers, ordering the shrine of St. *Genevieve* to be carried in procession thro' the city, to procure rain or fair-weather. For this, would your Lordship ridicule it? No, without doubt. Why then should it strive against prejudice, and oppose fanaticism, on a subject in other respects of much importance? What President, what Counsellor of Parliament is cynical enough, long to bear that the churches should be shut against him; that his body should be in danger of being buried in his garden, if he should die; that his wife, his daughters, his female relations, should shun him like a pestilence; that the priests, the monks, and the populace should load him with insults? To this, the Gentlemen of the Parliament would be reduced by an excommunication from *Rome*, vigorously supported by the Clergy, and left to its effects by the neutrality of the Court.

If the Pontiff had perceived no resource in the kindness which the Court used to have for the Society of Jesus, then he ought to have made the necessity of his concurrence, to legitimate the proscription, duly prized; he should have had a regard to his own private Treaty, and have been paid more for it than he could have gained by the concurrence of his operations. At worst, supposing that it had been extorted from him for nothing, he

he would at least have been a gainer by setting his authority free from arbitration, and by preserving his supremacy, as well as to bind and unbind consciences, as to raise and disband his forces. He was in the situation of a *Lacedæmonian* General, who made a retreat be sounded at the moment when his troops were in motion to fly; that it might not be said, that they had quitted the field of battle without orders. In short, he should have made a capitulation for the other bodies more immediately enlisted in his service; and by articles well and duly ratified, he might then have provided for their safety, which is now in the highest degree precarious.

THE vow which the Jesuits make of blind obedience to their Chief, and of particular submission to the Pope, is the greatest grievance that the Parliaments lay to the charge of the Society of *Loyola*. But the great Orders, called *Mendicants*, have the same engagements *de facto* and *de jure*. The only difference consists in their institution having been formed by men less eloquent and not so restless as to what pertained to their sovereignty as *Ignatius*; their engagements and connections are made in a manner more unpolished and less minute. *Francis d'Assise*, for instance, enjoins the numerous army that he maintains, at the expence of the Public,
under

under the standard of *Rome*, to obey in all things Pope *Honoré III* and his Successors. In like manner he orders them to be so devoted to the will of their superiors, as not to stir or act against it. These pious drones, terrified at the example of the Jesuits, have already circulated some copies of what they call *their Rule*. But they have not annexed to it the Commentaries and Explanations of their Doctors. They set a value on a restriction inserted in the body of the Rule, importing, that they must obey their Superiors in every thing that is not against their soul and their conscience. But the restriction is useless, as the Superiors arrogate a right of examining and determining what is, and is not, against the soul and the conscience of their subjects; since, according to the doctrine of their Schools, there is neither salvation for their souls, nor security for their consciences, but as they are obedient to the orders of the Pope. This has been demonstrated by the behaviour of the *Franciscans* of all colours, who have pleaded their conscience against the Bull *Unigenitus*. I am sensible, my Lord, that my desire to express my eagerness to oblige you makes me enter into discussions to which I am not equal. If I have reasoned wrong, your Lordship will excuse it, in consideration of the sentiments with which I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R IV.

TO MR. ROBERT S. ALDERMAN OF LONDON.

*Raillery on the moderation of the people of
England. Doctrine of Dreams. Allegorical
Dream.*

MY GOOD FRIEND,

YOU are determined to try me, or to divert yourself with my credulity. You will have no occasion to laugh either at the one or the other. Though I have more frequented the neighbourhood of St. James's than that of *Guildball*, I am nevertheless not an utter stranger to the latter; and it is not by mere words, that one of the principal Supporters of the † *King's Head* should make me believe that he sincerely wishes for Peace, be it what it will, provided it be honourable. You say, most admirably, "that the People of *England* ought to be well-satisfied with being placed by the successes of their arms in the situation which they wished to obtain when they began the war." This way of thinking would be noble, generous, and in

† A celebrated Tavern, where the Opposers of the Peace used to meet.

all respects worthy of *the Majesty* of the *English* People. But own, that it is with you as with them, nothing more than a way of talking. Honestly confess, that you have not the least faith in that moderation of our dear and brave countrymen. We broke with *France* in order to do ourselves justice. But our successes have enlarged our ideas. Tho' the discussion which arms have made of our title to *Acadia* and to the course of the *Obio* has not added one argument to their intrinsic worth, we would have them rendered by our victories incontestable. Hitherto all goes on well, and we are in the rules of right of all times and of all countries. But I am inclined to think, that we go farther, and that we adjudge the cause in our own favour with costs, damages, and interest. Am I right, my good friend? Is not this what you call doing ourselves justice? From hearing it said, are you not persuaded that we had these views and these hopes when the war began?

I AM not enough in my Lord-Duke's confidence, for him to communicate to me the instructions by which he negociates the Peace. You will do me the honour to believe, that, if he had so good an opinion of me as to trust me with any thing, I should, by keeping his secret, take care to clear him from imprudence and indiscretion. Let us prate,
my

my dear Sir, with all my heart. But let it be to as little purpose, as if we were taking a walk in your park, or smoking good *Turkish* tobacco in your *Kiosque*.

I HAD, some time ago, a dream, which made a strong impression on me. They laugh here at intermediate Beings, at their interfering in our affairs, at their manner of serving us, or amusing themselves, by presenting to us various emblematical pictures in our sleep, by making a kind of magic lanthorn act upon our drowsy senses. In this devout Popish country they admit only some guardian angels and devils, bad companions, who, by no means busying themselves on trifles, encounter one another, to carry, in spite of us, our poor souls into Paradise or Hell. Dreams are to them much the same as receipts for the tickets of a small lottery are to a man of your substance; they deign not to think that they are in being. Divines are pretty much the same at *Paris* as at *London*; they have their reasons for being evasive on the nature of dreams. But Natural Philosophers plainly say, that they are the effect of vapours, more or less gross, more or less melancholy, which digestion suffers to rise to the brain, whose fibres are moved with more or less regularity and succession, according as the organisation is disposed. If we believe them, there is
nothing

nothing in our dreams which does not result from the mechanism of our body. All the good and solid arguments which I have heard from you on the subject of Hobgoblins, would be thrown away on their learned obstinacy. For this reason I have kept my dream to myself; and the dish which I am going to serve up to you is quite new. If I am not much mistaken, the profound study which you have made of Oniromancy will enable you to discover in it some mysteries no less important, and an event more distant, than the Negotiation of the Duke of *Bedford*.

It was about half an hour after three in the morning, the time when digestion being completed, especially with a man accustomed to digest roast-beef, the stomach has no gross vapours to send to the brain. It was on a *Saturday*. I thought I was in *Hanover-square*. I saw the brilliant gilded statue. It was no longer that of our victorious King *George* *. The image was entirely changed; and I should not have known that I had been in that square, but by the steeple of *St. George's* church which spoils the view of it †. The

* [Whatever Sir *Robert* might dream, there was no Statue of our victorious King *George* in *Hanover-square*, as we remember, in 1762.]

† [In this the Writer differs from most observers, who

statue was that of a woman, whom I easily distinguished by her symbols, and knew to be *Great Britain*. The figure was colossal, her attitude warlike, but stiff. Her head was of a disproportioned largeness; her face was bloated; and her features, altered by a violent contraction of the muscles, foretold an approaching convulsion. Her two monstrous fists were clinched, and all bloody; they seemed only to hang by some strings of nerves to two dry and skinny arms, so nailed to the shoulders, that they could have no action but what was given them by the motion of the whole body. The belly was as flat as the breast was high. It might be said, that there were no bowels; the navel was almost fixed to the back-bone. The thighs and legs were lost amidst marine trophies, beyond which, some feet of a different form extended themselves out of all proportion, and without being finished.

My resentment was raised against the artist, and I expressed it without reserve, when a

who are of opinion, that this church, instead of spoiling, improves the view. In particular, the Author of some late *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvements of London*, speaking of this square, says, "George-street retires, converging to a point, which has a very picturesque effect, and the portico of St. George's church, seen in profile, enriches and beautifies the whole."]

hoarse

hoarse voice bawled in my ear *Mysterium*. I suspended my displeasure, in order to consider the rest of the work. The pedestal was an heap of bags and chests, on which, in the most natural attitudes, leaned four large and beautiful figures, representing *Wealth*, *Pride*, *Ambition*, and *Liberty*. Our celebrated † *Roubilliac* could not carve any thing more elegant. I heard a great noise, which made me turn my head. I saw an immense multitude gathered together, in the midst of which I could distinguish a great number of *Portuguese* and *German* Jews, come from *Holland*, and mixed with ours. As I recollected that it was *Saturday*, I was greatly surprised; and I said to myself, that some very powerful interest must be at stake, since for it the *Israelites* neglected the precept of their law. My eyes returned to the statue time enough to perceive a devil, or fiend, dressed partly like a *Frenchman*, and partly like a *Hollander*, who, holding in his hand a lighted match,

† A most excellent Sculptor, a native of *Lyons*, and the disciple of *Bouchardon*. [The original genius, as well as masterly execution, that are displayed in his monuments in *Westminster-Abbey*, viz. those of the Duke of *Argyle*, Sir *Peter Warren*, Mr. *Nightingale*, Mr. *Handel*, &c. will transmit his name with lustre to posterity. A Nobleman, who excels in judgment no less than in wit, well observed, that “*Roubilliac* only “ was a Statuary, but all the rest were Stone-cutters.”] crept,

crept, like a miner, under the pedestal. Some dreadful cries apprised me that he had not escaped the notice of the multitude. But the despair that was painted on all their faces, and which displayed itself by the most violent contorsions, left me no room to doubt that he had been observed too late. In fact, some eruptions of smoke and flame proclaimed his operation. The bags were consumed, and the chests burst. I was in hopes, that being filled with gold, the metal would resist the fire, and continue to form the base, so that the only consequence might have been displacing the statues, which, at the worst, the smoke would have blackened. But, instead of gold, I only saw some oak-leaves, which their moisture preserved but a moment from the violence of the flame. The detached statues fell headlong with a horrible crash; and this crash waked me.

IMAGINE, my good friend, the embarrassment and distress which such a vision must occasion to a good *Englishman*. From mere instinct, I ran to my trunk. I took out my porto-folio. I thought I should go mad, if I found in it a single oak-leaf. The Devil, who sometimes plays these tricks, would not suffer me to see any thing but paper. I turned over all my notes, which I found to be fair and good annuities of the last loan: this composed

composed me for the moment. Of my reflections, the whole day, I could comprehend nothing. From time to time I was seized with fits of uneasiness, and could only be cured of them by returning to visit my porto-folio. I have resolved to make some concession to my fears. I will change the nature of my property, and, whatever it may cost me, will purchase land. The Devil will be very cunning, if he plays me such tricks on good fields and meadows. Politics apart, be still my friend; and if you would have me satisfy you on the subject of your enquiries with as much accuracy as zeal, only make such as I can answer.

I am, &c.

P. S. Pray tell our friend *N.* that mental restrictions and reserves of intention are no longer known here, since the defeat of the Jesuits.

LET.

LETTER V.

MR. ALDERMAN S'S ANSWER.

Explanation of the Dream. Justification of the hopes and pretensions of the English.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

YOU banter me with your dream, and your affected reserve, so like a second-rate Minister. Let me assure you, once for all, that no court-grimaces can make us laugh at the Peace, if it be not on such terms as you know. *Basta* †. As to the former, let me tell you, that I have always thought you one who would dream with your eyes open, and would dream as the wisest men reason. I defy Dr. *Shebbeare* and Dr. † *Manlover*, broad-awake, to cast nativities with more precision than you in your sleep. I perfectly understand the meaning of your dream, my malicious friend. But I do not credit it. All that I

† [Enough.]

† [Author of *Considerations sur la Paix Generale*. Printed at Stutgard 1762. See Letters XXII. and XXX.]

can do to please you, is to tell you, with the *French* Poet, that

*An air of truth we often may descry
Ev'n in the most notorious lye. †*

The air of truth is, in my opinion, nothing more than a shadow of probability. That your vision should be realised is not impossible. Happily, there is no reason to apprehend it. I would not, however, have my lot assigned me in the pedestal of your statue. Perhaps it is in me mere fickleness: men are out of conceit with being good, as they are tired with being wicked. I am fond of the persuasion, that we shall have the happiness to prevent your little devil, half *French*, half *Dutch*. A few good sessions will be sufficient for the two Houses to fasten the two hands again to the wrists, to restore to the two arms their joints and their plumpness. The largeness of the head, and the elevation of the thorax, are a want of proportion, but

† [*Souvent un air de verité
Se mele au plus grossier mensonge, &c.*

Voltaire to the Princess Amelia of Prussia.

See these Verses, and the King's Answer, with a Translation of both, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1762, p. 187.]

they

they are not always faults. With the one the respiration is stronger and easier, and the other not hanging down in a man, as it does in a beast, it does not burden the neck, if it be held high and upright. The Admiralty will take care of the legs and thighs, which were concealed from you by the trophies. Lastly, the feet, according to your vision, not having had the finishing stroke, you were in the wrong to be so much offended with their present deformity and apparent difference. All this will be corrected by the last hand. As to your four figures, they are over-charged. Among our men of genius some persons of taste may be found who will make a different distribution. They will give to the three first the attitude of the † four in the *Place des Victoires* at *Paris*; and they will remove the fourth from its corner, in order to place it more eminently in better company. Do you think I have any skill in Oniromancy?

Be not uneasy, my dear Sir *Robert*, about the *Scotch* and *Irish*, who have struck vigorous

† [Four slaves of brass on the pedestal of *Lewis XIV's* statue, with basso-relievos of his battles and conquests. *Voltaire*, in his *Age of Lewis XIV*, ch. 26, says, that "those four slaves express the vices which that Prince subdued, rather than the nations which he conquered.]

blows in this war. If they should not return, *we shall not have fewer hands at the extremity of our arms.* They will people such countries as they think better than their own; and their own will have new inhabitants, who will soon be endued by the climate with the same strength and courage, without being so untractable. It has been advantageous to them that those two kingdoms have for some time past been united to *England*. A man will be cured of squinting, if he is prevented for some weeks from turning his eyes at will. The two kingdoms restored to the freedom of moving would by habit be determined to move like the principal. The immensity of *London*, the wealth and pride of its inhabitants, have their admirers, who pretend, that they are essentially suitable to a monarchy which has the empire of the sea and of commerce. They say, that the situation of *England* does not allow her to proportion things to the extent and fertility of the island; that *Tyre* was a head in a very different manner disproportioned to *Phœnicia*. Navigation and commerce compose those legs and thighs which you did not observe. The arsenals, dock-yards, and magazines of *Portsmouth*, *Plymouth*, and the *Thames*, should set your mind at ease as to these noble parts. The *French King* may perhaps, if he pleases, be on a par with us
at

at *Brest*, *Roche fort*, and *Toulon*. But whatever may be his will and pleasure, he will require many generations to revive that marine military ardor, which for sixty years past has been thought extinguished in his nobility. This is a good dæmon who possesses even the lowest of our sailors, and who is too well obeyed to quit us, and prefer living with our volatile neighbours. The taste of the *French* for finery and grandeur resembles their politeness, which, the more warmth and openness it displays at first, the sooner it cools and is exhausted. Lastly, our possessions in the two *Indies*, which were represented to you by two monstrous and unequal feet, scarce formed, will in time have the finishing stroke, by the help of those swarms of foreigners who will desire to be transplanted thither.

Now, my dear Knight, let me ask you, whether our Citizens of *Guildhall*, who see your statue of *Hanover-square* with these eyes, are fools for enlarging their ideas and pretensions in proportion to the successes of our arms? The mystery, which you seem to ascribe to the negociation of the Duke of *Bedford*, forebodes no good either to his Grace, or to the Ministers of whom he is the coadjutor. Without setting up for a prophet, I can venture to assure you, that

D 2

their

their Excellencies will not baffle our hopes with impunity. It was necessary for us to be thus resolute, as we had an interest thus direct, thus strong, thus firmly supported, fifty years ago; and those who checked our theft, suffered for it. The *French* will see us with as evil an eye possess what we shall keep, as keep all that we have taken from them: they will watch an opportunity to recover the one no less than to regain the other. We shall preserve our conquests, to whatever we confine them, no longer than while our marine shall be superior; and the more numerous our conquests are, the more easily shall we have funds for the support of that powerful marine. In short, we have the right of the strongest: the law of arms has absolutely determined the cause in our favour. I allow, that the object of the war nevertheless continues the same; that there is still the same degree of justice in our first pretensions. But we may have a hearing on the costs, damages, and interest. Do you think that the possession of all our conquests would not still leave us in debt? Such, my dear Sir *Robert*, is the general voice of the people of *England* in my neighbourhood. Now tell me, at your leisure, what regard you pay to the opinion of the people in yours; and take care not to annex at present more importance

tance to our discourse than you used to do. Otherwise, standing with you on the *French* ceremonial, I should tell you with the utmost falshood, that I have the honour to be, with the highest regard,

SIR,

Your most humble

and most obedient servant.



LETTER VI.

TO THE EARL OF B.

Idea of a circle, or an assembly, of Financers of high rank. Rendezvous with a Financer of the first distinction. Discourse on the Office of Finances in France. How and why the charge of Superintendant was suppressed. Idea of that of Comptroller-General, which was substituted in the room of it. Short review of the successors of M. Colbert. What part Mess. Paris acted. Scrutiny of the administration of M. Silhouette. Inconveniences of that Minister's narrow genius and strong imagination. Observation on the Duke of Sully. Criticism on the three principal operations of M. Silhouette. In what each of them was essentially wrong. What kind of reputation he acquired. Particulars of M. Bertin.

MY LORD,

I HAVE artfully engaged myself to sup with the flower of the finances at a Financer's of the first rank. I considered this party as a barrister would, supposing they had been so many able lawyers. Though I was well apprised that the Financers at present

present are not those coarse and slovingly splendid wretches whom the wits of the last age have delivered down to the hatred and contempt of the Public, yet I did not expect an assembly worthy of having for its President the King of men of mode. Great was my surprise to hear, for about an hour, the most vociferous babble on the theatres, the actors, the actresses, the dancers, the puppets, &c. I thought my evening lost. I heard with a stupid attention some childish trifles discussed with all the warmth that is usual in discussing the most important questions. We sat down to table; the cook and the steward were by turns the subjects of discourse. Fifty small dishes, ranged round an enormous piece of plate, seemed served up rather to regale the eyes than to satisfy the appetite. They extolled, from time to time, the fashionable taste which had banished that coarse butchers meat which gave to an entertainment of persons of quality the air of a country wedding. Some valetudinarians, distinguished by their paleness, learnedly harangued on the difficulty of digesting the lightest meats. I could refrain no longer; and in the most modest terms that I could use, I endeavoured to justify those, who, like myself, eat to preserve and recruit their strength. I was so lucky as not to give offence,

D 4

fence, and principally to attract the attention of the man in the assembly of whom I had the most advantageous opinion. Emboldened by his approbation, I ventured upon raillery and humour, in which I was so successful, that all who kept house engaged to give me in their turns a dinner according to the ancient culinary establishment. The lot for the next day fell on the friend to whom I had already devoted myself *in petto*. Two o'clock was the hour appointed, and he politely invited me to come sooner, that we might have time to be acquainted before the arrival of the guests. As we intermixed towards the end of the desert, I had an opportunity to ask some information. My friend was described to me like the antipode of the *Turcarets*, who are so justly despised†. He was said to have learning, with choice and discernment, and without ostentation. Contented with a fortune, which is moderate in comparison of what he might have made, he loves the State, and only loves his own family more than the State, ready, in all things, to serve

† [The name of *Turk* being stigmatised by the *Arabs* and *Persians*, as a word implying rudeness and barbarity, the *Othman* Porte will not be called the *Turkish* Court. *Turkiye* signifies rude and uncivilised.

Cantemir *Hist. Othm. Emp. Pref. p. 8.*]

his King and country, except by ruining himself.

I WAS at his house the next day soon after twelve. My eagerness seemed to please him: he was a very different man from what he was the evening before. We conversed immediately like reasonable people; and I led him imperceptibly to the text which I had in view. The discourse turned on the management of the Finances of the two Crowns. I will give your Lordship an account of it, with as much precision as I am able, without tiring you with our transitions, or with the part which I acted to keep up the discourse.

“THERE is no longer in *France* the post of High-treasurer, or Super-intendant of the Finances. It was suppressed by *Lewis XIV.*, at the instance of *M. Colbert*, who only wanting the reality of succeeding *M. Fouquet*, desired the extinction of a dignity, whose honours and prerogatives seemed to him much above the rank to which he was born. He lost nothing by the reform. On the contrary, by only changing the name, he raised himself above the dangers annexed to the employment; and he gave a check to the jealousy which the rapidity of his rise could not but have excited against him. In the state to which the place is reduced, it has almost all its former advantages, without any

of its former dangers. The Comptroller is not considered as responsible; and the King's orders, under which he acts, are his security. No Comptroller of the Finances has yet been disgraced, who has undergone an enquiry into his conduct. The worst that befalls him is the being accused of incapacity; and for that he is more to be pitied than blamed. He is almost as much master of the Office as the Super-intendant was; and he draws from us so much the larger presents, as his title of Comptroller engages his attention to a thousand particulars, which a Super-intendant, if he be not a *Sully*, would think beneath his dignity. A Comptroller, who could convince the Farmers, that he does not study their business, nor pretend to comprehend the art of it, would require only two years to establish the richest family in *Paris*. Among the successors of *Colbert*, M. † *Desmarets* made some noise in the last reign. But he was only a sharper, who got rid, with some address, of the cash of the State and its incumbrances, by converting the security into paper. I shall say nothing of the famous *Law*, because I should have too much to say. After him, the first who

† [Nephew to M. *Colbert*. He succeeded M. *Chamillard* in the Finances in 1704.]

made any figure was M. Orry, who was Comptroller-General during most part of the time of Cardinal *de Fleury's* Ministry. His Father had been Commissary of the Stores in the wars of *Spain*: he himself had served there as Captain of horse. This was not a school for the Finances. However, M. Orry conducted them with ability. He was harsh and blunt, but laborious, intelligent, and faithful. He would probably have done great things in that department, if he had not been straitened by the prejudices and timidity of his superior, who had only the spirit of oeconomy, but by no means the genius of a man of finance. M. Orry made his retreat in consequence of a quarrel which he had with Mess. † *Paris*, whose talents and fortune are the wonder of *France*. Perhaps the Comptroller expected too much from their gratitude. This is an object of which the most prodigal Financer is extremely covetous. M. Orry thought that these gentlemen were ungrateful to him. He was fond of remembering that he had obliged them; and he quoted with satisfaction the very year in which he had given them the preference for fourteen millions of actions extraordinary. Be that as it may, Mess. *Paris* were

† [Four brothers, who, though they had never before had any thing to do with public affairs, undertook, towards

from that time the soul of that department. M. Orry's successors, down to M. *Silhouette*, really made them their colleagues and co-adjutors, and they were great gainers by it. You will see in what reputation this Minister is held among the people by the dwelling-place which satire has assigned him. His house is placed in *Empty pocket-street*. We must not form an opinion of this worthy man from sarcasm. Certain it is, that M. *Silhouette* has many of the natural and acquired talents of a statesman. He loves his King and country, has a strong imagination, an enterprising genius, and a mind cultivated by prodigious reading. Let us set aside his virtues, and his excellent qualities for society, which rendered him one of the most amiable and valuable men in *France* when he was in a private station. It is the business of his friends to exhibit him in this point of view. For my part, I would only see him at present in his public character. I can assure

wards the end of the year 1721, after the failure of *Laro's* project, to reform the State by taking an account of the situation of the private fortunes of individuals; an enterprize not less extraordinary than the project itself. But though they had never before had any thing to do with public affairs, their genius and application deserved to be trusted with the fortune of the nation.

Age of Lewis XV, ch. 2.]
you,

you, that M. *Silhouette* was placed out of his sphere, when he was set at the head of the Finances rather than at that of one of the other Offices of State.

“*FRANCE* has always had the misfortune to have in this place some men who have been either too brilliant, or too dull. The latter, in continual distrust of themselves, and of all about them, dare not correct, new-model, or undertake any thing. The machine is, in their hands, a wheel, which turns at random, after the first impulse. Its motions every moment lose their regularity. The distribution which it should make becomes unequal; it diffuses every where a languor and decay which call forth its resources. Such was the administration of M. *de M.* and that of M. *de B.* The Financier in chief, who is endued with a strong imagination, and who gives himself up to it, is still more dangerous. His views are enlarged; and he always presses forward towards the end proposed, without dwelling on trifling particulars, on expedients of the second or third rank, the number of which might however give him the best assistance, or occasion him the greatest embarrassment. He governs himself by a system, without observing that a new system requires a new coining, as impracticable in a great Monarchy, as it is easy in a small State.”

I

I APPLAUDED, my Lord, these generous principles, in order to give my gentleman encouragement. I shewed him, that my applause was that of a connoisseur, by quoting our Court of Exchequer, which the difficulties and inconveniences of a total reform have made us retain with its ancient faults, which in modern policy are monsters. This instance, produced very opportunely, completely gained him over to me. He saw that I listened to him with attention, and he was thereby encouraged to treat the subject with more precision. He proceeded:

“ M. *SILHOUETTE* has too much genius, and gives himself too much up to his imagination. By that he has injured the King's affairs more than would have been done by ten men of ordinary abilities who had succeeded to his employment. The Duke of *Sully*, Prime-minister of *Henry IV*, is esteemed the first and greatest Financier, that *France*, and perhaps any one of the great States of *Europe*, ever had. I readily subscribe to this elogium of that immortal patriot. But if *Sully* did great things, and he certainly did many, it was more by the propriety of his judgment, and his application to business, than by the strength of his genius and the vigour of his imagination. I compare him to an able and judicious purchaser

chafer of a dilapidated house, who examines most minutely those parts of the building which are damaged, observes the method that is necessary to be pursued in the repairs, so to shake nothing, and proceeds in them step by step, beginning with those which are most urgent. The Duke of *Sully* had no idea of pulling down and rebuilding a house, which was only in danger of falling for want of repairs. He established it on its old foundations, to which he added their original solidity, and labouring successively on every part, by dint of patience, and by the help of an exact discernment in the application and distribution of workmen and materials, he was enabled perfectly to restore, to renew the edifice. It would have been nothing but rubbish and confusion, if he had executed that immense work all at once. What would this wise Minister have thought of the impetuous man, who should have advised him to pull down the old building, before he had any thing ready for the construction of a new one? This, however, is what M. *Silhouette* had determined. He used the Farmers ill, and undermined the Farms, before he had any thing to substitute in their room. He set the King at variance with his creditors, before he had taken care to prevent his Majesty from wanting their assistance. I see, by your
looks,

looks, that you suspect me of having a particular prejudice against this Minister, or of sharing, like a good associate, that of my brethren. But I will now proceed to proofs. Let us enter boldly on a discussion of the most brilliant operations of this Minister so unhappily patriotic.

“ THE first was to obtain for the King the sum of seventy-two millions of livres, by a loan which did not affect the revenues of the State for the present. For this purpose, he had the creation of seventy-two thousand actions, for which he made the Public eagerly desirous by attaching to them an emolument taken from that which the Farmers-general shared among themselves as the lawful profit of the management of the general Farms. The Public, whose jealousy our wealth cannot fail to draw upon us, saw only the plan projected at our expence, and formed the most favourable presages of the new Comptroller. Without insisting, that paper-money is not made for the *French*, in whom, besides, forty years have not yet effaced the remembrance of its little solidity in an absolute monarchy: we will not enquire whether such a symbol of gold and silver was admissible, we must begin by inviolably limiting its increase, which in any State is impossible. Lastly, we will defer till another time to examine whether it is not

an instrument of dissipation, which, sooner or later, must ruin the public finances and private fortunes.

“ M. *SILHOUETTE*, prejudiced in favour of *England*, imagined that there was no way to arrive at wealth but that which the *English* Government has adopted. He had, however, *Holland* and *Zealand* before his eyes, who date the decay of that of their State from the moment in which they engaged in a plan somewhat similar. Those Provinces have never been so rich (I only speak of the State) as they were before they issued their draughts upon the Exchange. For one minute, let us allow, that M. *Silhouette* was not in an error. But as his first operation was a blow aimed at the Farmers-general, with a menace of its soon being followed by others of more consequence, he might expect to have their defensive efforts to sustain.

“ NEITHER *France*, nor any country in the world, provided the State be not in its infancy, can furnish twenty citizens, who in practice would not prefer their private welfare to what a Minister tells them is the public good. First, because every one loves himself principally. Secondly, because we see things in our own peculiar manner, and are with difficulty persuaded that the King's Minister

Minister sees better what interests us. All his preambles, all his arguments, are suspected by us: we receive his sentiments as the opinion of one, as liable to err and be mistaken as any other man; and the esteem which we all have for ourselves, inclines us to think, that the State and the Sovereign are generally in our debt. Every Statesman, and especially he who ventures to be a reformer, ought constantly to remember, that he has to do with men, that is, with animals whom their passions influence, and whom their interest, either real or apparent, always determines.

“ HAVING formed the design of ruining or reducing the Farmers-general, M. *Silhouette* should have begun by establishing his own credit independent on theirs. His paper should not have been issued in public, till after he had been sure of the banks, that the mistrustful, fickle, necessitous stockholders might have no difficulty to realise their actions. *Law* was aware of this, notwithstanding all his vehemence. Before he circulated his notes, he had lodged in his bank such funds as he thought sufficient to make a stand. M. *Silhouette* neglected this previous step; and presuming on the King's concurrence, as they presume in *England* on the concurrence of Parliament, he hoped every

every thing from the confidence of the Public.

“THE eagerness to purchase the actions satisfied the Minister, who did not search for the true cause of it. He had no suspicion that the Farmers themselves, served by private agents, were the greediest buyers, and that the ruin or success of that splendid enterprize was at hand. The price, which for some time kept above par, conspired to lull him into a perfect security. But on a sudden the price fell; the actions circulated with a discount, small indeed, but sufficient to shew the Public, that these were as unsafe as the other royal papers. The alarm spread, and the Farmers soon drew up the sluice. The Exchange was overflowed with actions; every one wanted to sell; no one offered to buy, but at a very great discount. Their credit was notoriously lost; and M. *Silhouette*, who had provoked and braved us, thought himself happy in our consenting to answer his engagements, on terms which we prescribed. I have no doubt but that this Minister made large ideal advances when he started this brilliant scheme, of which he did not condescend to examine in time the minute particulars and appendages.

“THIS first attempt was followed by another still more detrimental to the State, and
more

more capable of proving the justice of every prejudice against Ministers of the Finances who too much indulge their imagination. The King having occasion for a subsidy both immediate and considerable, M. *Silhouette*, as much an enemy to loans, as to new taxes, thought he could force the King's old creditors to furnish this subsidy, without giving them any security. He shut his Majesty's coffers against them; and he was persuaded that he ran no risk but that of making them a little clamorous. "They will be pacified, *said he to himself*, by the promise that has been "made them to pay them at a more favourable juncture, by the assurance that has "been given them that their capitals shall "be in no danger;" and he flattered himself, that his punctual performance of these promises, both as to time and place, would increase the King's credit. But a creditor is not paid with reasons. The more his debtors are embarrassed, the less is he disposed to leave his money in their hands. They were told, that they should have no other trouble than that of waiting. But that is what they most dread, and what would have prevented their engaging with the King, if they had foreseen it. The high annual interest is what determines most of the *French*, and all foreigners, to place their capitals in his Majesty's

jefty's service. Past experience tells them, that one time or other there will be a reduction of that interest, and a composition as to the repayment of the principal. They calculate thus: they measure before-hand the duration of the crisis during which their contract will not be altered; they compute the sum total of interest which they shall have received when it is over; and reckoning the profits of their money already gained, they wait without uneasiness, and see without surprise that they have mis-calculated after the Peace. But here all the speculations of the King's creditors were disconcerted. The Minister attacked their good-will, a tender point: they were out of humour.

“ THERE then happened at *Paris* what happened at *London* in the reign of King *Charles II*, who, in the same distress, had the same resource. You will recollect, no doubt, that that Prince, not obtaining from his Parliament the subsidy which he demanded, and not knowing how to make new loans, shut up the Exchequer for a year; that is to say, the edict implied, that the King's Treasury would not honour any of his bills during that time. By this that Monarch lost his credit for the rest of his life. It is incredible, that a Minister, who has made the *British* Government his peculiar study, should
have

have had, in time of need, so little notion of that striking passage in the *English* history. The same effects resulted from the same cause. Every one was afraid to be concerned with the King; no one ventured to appear rich; and the State was poor, because rich individuals deprived themselves of the enjoyment of their wealth. Foreigners saw no more security for the future, than they could find for the present. The money which we had at command in *Holland*, for six or seven *per Cent*, two days before this transaction of M. *Silhouette*, was refused us, two days after, at fourteen and fifteen.

“REDUCED by the ruin of the royal credit abroad and at home, to make oeconomy his resource, M. *Silhouette* preached up patriotism and disinterestedness. If you have had time to learn the present state of our morals, you will see the romantic absurdity of that idea. It was a caricatura of *Cato of Utica*, whose severe virtue preposterously contributed to the ruin of the *Roman* republic more than the arms of *Cesar*. Our Minister demanded of his Majesty a reduction of the expence of his household; he proposed a diminution of all the pensions, the suppression of many, moderation in rewards, for the future. As he promised great effects from these arrangements, he was not refused them.
He

He had then all imaginable obstacles to encounter. The Nobleman, who runs in debt to appear with more splendor, regarded this domestic frugality as parsimony, the officers of the Court, who have appointments much inferior to the revenue of their office, and to the expence in which the duty of it involves them, and who could not support it but by the help of the profits commonly called *les tours du baton* (perquisites) exclaimed at the injustice of it. The pensioners, whose number in *France* is considerable, their pensions being small, whose complaints and murmurs were uttered with the more boldness, as they have this poor income less as a favour than as a reward, set the whole Court in an uproar. The King saw nothing about his person but sorrowful countenances, he heard nothing but complaints. The hope of reward, which is one of the two hinges of every well-established Government, and the prime cause of patriotic zeal, was extinguished in every Courtier as well as in every military man. In *England* a clamour would have been raised against the Minister; and a commotion would have laid him under the necessity of resigning his place. Agreeably to our temper, which is less serious than yours, we diverted ourselves at the expence of the reformer. Some songs and pasquinades delivered him up to the

the raillery of the people of the Capital and of the Provinces. Fashion seized his name †, and inserted it in the new bills of the shops near the Palace. Every thing appeared *à la Silhouette*. The several artisans aggravated the charge through emulation. The very name became ridiculous. There are few instances of a reputation so suddenly lost. The favour of * *Barradas*, the fame of § *Bechamel* and of ‡ *Ramponneau*, did not vanish

† The caps *à la Silhouette* were the wings of a bat in brass-wire, meanly covered with a simple gauze. The coats had no plaits, the breeches no pockets. The snuff-boxes were of wood unpolished, the watches with half a case of gold or silver. The pictures *à la Silhouette* were faces drawn in profile on black paper, from the shadow of a candle on a sheet of white paper nailed to the wall. [This last fashion (like many others) was from hence probably introduced into *England* a few years ago.]

* The favourite of *Lewis XIII* for some days [six months.] The fortune of *Barradas* became a proverb for any thing of short continuance.

§ Master of the King's household, a man of great vanity and mean abilities. There was a song made on him, *Long live the King and Bechamel*, &c.

‡ A tavern-keeper at *Paris*, who sold wine at two sols a pint, and became famous by the great resort of the populace to his house. Many persons of the first distinction were pleased sometimes to increase this large concourse. The name of *Ramponneau* was almost as famous as that of *Silhouette*. One of the theatres at *Paris* thought to retrieve its credit by engaging this tavern-keeper to exhibit himself in public with the actors.

with

with more rapidity. *M. Silhouette*, had he been as valuable for his abilities, as he is respectable for his good intentions, would have seen that he had no other step to take but that of retiring. He resolved upon it soon enough for his own tranquillity, but too late for the welfare of the State.

“ *M. BERTIN* is now Comptroller-General. He is mild, patient, and exact. These talents are essential in a man who is at the head of a department where the whole business is calculation. *M. Bertin* enjoys a great reputation with firmness and integrity. From being Master of Requests, he became Intendant of *Roussillon*. He sat out for that Province with express orders from Count *d'Argenson*, Secretary at War, to have the great roads towards *Catalonia* diligently repaired, and to apply to that purpose some part of the King's treasure which he would find in cash at *Perpignan*. He was scarce arrived, when an Officer of high rank in the army, and who had great interest at Court, both by his birth, and by his being related to a Minister, went to him and demanded that sum, which, he said, he wanted for his Majesty's service. The Intendant excused himself from delivering it, on account of its having been particularly appropriated by the Count *d'Argenson*. The great Officer insisted, was obstinate,

nate, and resented the refusal. Soon after, M. *Bertin* received his letter of recall. He went to Court, closely followed by his antagonist, who had great confidence in the interest of the Minister his kinsman, and whose resentment probably did not end there. M. *Bertin* had already made some fruitless applications, when he had an opportunity of mentioning his cause to a Prelate who had the King's ear. The Bishop was struck with the injustice which seemed to punish an act of fidelity and firmness deserving reward. He undertook to inform his Majesty of it; and he kept his word. The great Officer disappeared at Court a few days after, and returned to his employment. But M. *Bertin* was not sent back to his Intendancy. The Minister who patronised the great Officer, thought that his credit would be hurt by it. He made an effort to rob the Public of the authentic testimony of the check which he had received; and this great concern to save appearances deprived M. *Bertin* of his triumph and of the proof of his innocence. He re-entered himself in the body of Masters of Requests. The Intendancy of *Lyons* being vacant some time after, the Court, without thinking any more of him, was going to dispose of it in favour of one of that society who was in rotation for the first place.

place. But all that body of Magistrates sent a deputation to the Comptroller-General to intreat his voice and good offices in behalf of M. *Bertin*, who had not deserved to be removed from the Intendancy of *Perpignan*, and who had been made no amends. He had therefore the very singular honour of being nominated by his own competitors.

“ His administration has confirmed the idea which this mark of distinction gave of him. He was afterwards appointed to the Lieutenant-Generalship of the Police of *Paris*, an office peculiar, in its kind, for the almost infinite variety of its business, and for the opportunities which it affords a Statesman of displaying and exerting, both in great and small, the extent of his genius, the justness of his discernment, and the resources of his prudence. By this M. *Bertin* was trained to that habit of method which the employment with which he is now invested requires, and to which it was not long before he was promoted.”

THIS, my Lord, is an abstract of my discourse for above two hours with a man, whom, the evening before, I should not have thought capable of supporting a solid conversation for a quarter of an hour. I place him in the first rank of those good masqueraders, whom I had the honour to men-

tion to your Lordship in my last but one. I discovered to him nothing but curiosity. The least appearance of eagerness would have put him on his guard; instead of which, he delivered himself with the utmost freedom. He invited me to pass a day with him, next week, at his country-house, which he calls his hermitage, and which, it is said, is splendidly elegant. I shall take care to be punctual to the appointment, as it is probable, that I shall draw from him alone intelligence more to your satisfaction, than from all my enquiries and my reading.

I am, with respect, &c.



LET-

L E T T E R VII.

TO MR. M. MEMBER OF THE BRITISH
PARLIAMENT.

Difference between the internal ferment in France and in England. That, among the French, the manner and way of thinking, writing, and speaking are a matter of mode. How little dangerous are the disputes in France on the regal prerogative and the liberty of the people. How the French easily return to the spirit of absolute Monarchy. Mistake of Cardinal de Retz in that respect. Excessive stiffness and complaisance of the Parliament of Paris in the last reign. Criticism on a reflection of President Henault. Observation on the Government of France in the time of Lewis XI. True idea of Parliaments. First era of their influence in State affairs. What share they had in them. The fundamental law of the kingdom is by tradition. Difference between the process against the Jesuits, and that which the Parliaments would carry on against the Financers. Account of the States of France. That it would be absurd to substitute the Parliaments in their stead. How a good Englishman is interested in the pretensions of the Parliaments of France. Essen-

tial difference between the people of the two Monarchies, as to their rights. Very strong argument against the new title, Classes of the Parliament of the King, or of the Kingdom.

SIR,

YOU judge of *France* from the perfect knowledge which you have of *England*, our dear country; and you are in an error. Your speculations on the dawn of revolution, which you think you discover, are deeply argumentative. But their application is misplaced. The leaven which has produced our great revolutions was not perhaps in so large a quantity, or so highly fermented with us, as it seems to be here. However, there will not result from the latter the slightest change in the constitution of the Sovereign and people of *France*. Take my prediction literally. With us, the leaven remains concealed: it frets and expands itself in private. The fermentation long lies hid: it does not appear, till it is at its utmost height; and when it declares itself, it is always by breaking the vessel. With the *French*, on the contrary, every thing is done, if I may so say, with a grand air, and openly. This frankness is not constrained. Its ebullition is a diversion to them;

them; the superfluous spirits work and evaporate; the dregs subside of themselves; every thing returns to order, to continue there in peace till time brings about the necessity of that revivication. To a chemist of your skill, Sir, I express myself clearly. However, I will not stop there; and since you have done me the honour to raise me to your own level, by condescending to reason with me on such serious subjects, I will now make an effort to exalt myself to a strain, which by a small descent, will bring you down to me.

EVERY thing among the *French* is a matter of mode. The manner of thinking is subjected to the mode, like the manner of dressing. All the difference consists in their duration. Every week introduces a change in apparel. Sometimes opinions continue many years the same. The disputes on divinity and devotion, which ceased with *Lewis XIV*, were followed by an unbridled libertinism, which gave place to a taste for natural philosophy, to which succeeded the calculation of exchange and stock-jobbing. Afterwards came the madness of writing and talking in a military strain. Speculations on commerce banished this. But the enthusiasm, which they occasioned, lasted no longer than was necessary for it to infect the minds of men in all

the classes of the nation. They fled before agriculture, the study and practice of which were recommended with a vivacity which would have induced you to think, that it would become the prevailing interest of the nation, and the principal object of Government. Several academies were established in the cities, which made the burghers admire many scientific methods practised by the peasants. Courtiers, Officers, Magistrates, Ecclesiastics, have treated on the best manner of cultivating land. But the cultivators continue in the old track; and they were given up to it, when it appeared that these obstinate people refused to incur the hazards and expence of the first experiments of the new method. The re-establishment of the marine has offered, very opportunely, an avocation. Now, when this subject is exhausted, and the Ministry makes it the King's concern, they apply themselves to the finances, and to such discussions as relate to the three revenue-operations:

THE extent of the regal authority in this department, and that of the influence which the Parliaments may pretend to have in it, are the two principal texts. They are treated with all the warmth imaginable. But this warmth is in the *French* blood. The dispute, by being carried on with so much heat, will have no other effect. Those very people,
who

who are most earnest in the cause, either do not see the consequences that may attend it, or persuade themselves that it will not be carried so far as it may. Believe me, Sir, they will not dispute on these dangerous points any farther than to perceive the danger of solving them; and the present dispute will constantly give place to some other, without leaving any more traces than remain of the appeals of the * Bull, of the miracles of the famous † Deacon, and of other trash which the Court permits for the amusement of the idle and *perturbed spirits* of the Capital and the Provinces.

To draw some just presages for the future, and consequences from the present, in political affairs, no way is more certain than a discussion of the past. For want of thus looking back to the sport of passions, which in the main is always the same in all ages, the most able speculatists are mistaken in their arguments. If we listen to the famous Cardinal *de Retz*, one of the most acute politicians of the last century, we should think that the regal authority would never have recovered the blows that were given it by

* [*Unigenitus.*]

† [The Abbé *Paris*. See *Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV. chap. 33.*]

the Parliaments, during the minority of *Lewis XIV.*

“ THE Parliament, *says he, in his curious*
 “ *Memoirs*, has caused questions to be debated
 “ which were venerable by their obscurity : it
 “ has rendered them problematical, and
 “ therefore odious to half the world. The
 “ people are entered into the sanctuary; they
 “ have removed the veil which ought always
 “ to cover all that can be said, and all that
 “ can be thought, concerning the rights of
 “ subjects and of Kings, which never agree
 “ so well together as in silence.....The Par-
 “ liament has profaned the mysteries, &c.

THE Parliament of *Paris*, Sir, did more than all this. The author of the *Political History of the Age* was the first who observed, that the Sovereign Courts of *France*, which are only tribunals of distributive justice, established by the King, have carried their attacks on the regal authority as far as our *long Parliament*, which drove from the throne the unfortunate *Charles I*, carried theirs. But that from thence it by no means follows, unless the *French* in a fit of ill humour should be tired of their yoke, that they will exert themselves to shake it off, or to remove it; and it is so well fitted to their necks, that these are placed beneath, and that above, by the shocks themselves and the agitation.

IN the first years after the troubles of the † *Fronde*, *Mazarin* might with impunity have tried the patience of the people to the utmost; and *Lewis XIV* scarce began to reign alone, but he displayed the regal authority with a plenitude unknown to former reigns. His adversaries were ashamed to think of restraining it. The young King offered his edicts to be verified, as if the verifying had never been deemed more than a notification merely formal. He found more complaisance in the Parliament of *Paris* than among his Courtiers, more docility than among the Princes of his Blood, fewer objections than from his Ministers. I will only refer you to the declaration of that Monarch on his Treaty of 1662 for the acquisition of *Lorraine*, on condition of adopting all the *Lorraine* Princes as Princes of the Blood of *France*, and of acknowledging them as heirs to the Crown, in default of the *Bourbons*. The Princes of the Blood protested in opposition to his Majesty's will. The Dukes and Peers murmured some complaints; the Chancellor *le Tellier* plainly told the King, that " he could not make Princes of the " Blood of *France*, but with the Queen his

† [The League against Cardinal *Mazarin* in 1647, in which one party took the name of *Frondeurs*, and the other that of *Mazarinists*.]

" wife."

"wife." The Parliament of *Paris* had none of these scruples. They verified and registered the declaration, only adding, as a clause, that the Treaty should not take place, till the interested parties had consented to it. The President *Henault* gravely says, that "this clause prevented the Treaty from being executed." That Magistrate banters his readers. Without the Parliament's interfering, the clause is included in the nature of a contract. But what honesty was there in the procedure of the Members, who being entrusted with the charge of stopping, by their remonstrances, this unprecedented act of despotism, by avoiding the discussion of it, made a merit of their complaisance with the Monarch, and exposed to his persecutions, to his resentment, those, who had not, like this august assembly, the public good and the national rights to allege, in justification of their opposition? What would have become of that clause, to which this historical Magistrate ascribes the honour of the Treaty's not being executed, if, by caresses or threats, the King had gained the consent of the interested Princes? Did not the depositary of the laws abandon their support and protection to the private interest of the opposing Princes? Did it not give them up to their discretion? The genius of the body suggested to the President his ridiculous observation. It

It is certain, that, after the civil wars of Religion and of the League, the regal authority was, in the hands of *Henry IV*, as absolute as it was in those of *Francis I*. This relapse was agreeable to the temper and character of the nation, which is so formed for a constitution purely monarchical, that, after its fits of disgust, it loves to acknowledge the marks of delirium in the attempts which it has made to wound them. We see, in the *Satire Menippée*, which became the book in vogue, when the League was at its last gasp, the idea which the whole nation retained of that dreadful confederacy, which seemed to have shaken the throne to its foundations.

UNDER the reign of *Lewis XI*, the first King of *France* who gave the Monarchy its form, the nation was astonished to see its King shew himself rather a master than a chief, and affect a total independence on all the orders of the State. The Lords feudataries of the Crown were weak and very few in number. But there were many gentlemen, who, during the civil and foreign wars, had gained great esteem with the King and people. These latter, who aimed at nothing less than to entail on themselves the rights and prerogatives of the ancient Peers and Barons, joined themselves to the remains of the former, to stop the flight which the regal authority

authority was taking. All had recourse to arms; they styled themselves *Leaguers for the public good*; as if it was an advantage to a nation to have a hundred tyrants rather than one master. This was the last gasp of the Aristo-monarchy, or of the Monarchical-oligarchy. *Lewis XI* had no great trouble to disunite men, most of whom had nothing but pretensions. He brought about an accommodation, in which, without explaining the degree and extent of his rights, he promised to chuse a Council, by whose advice he would be guided as well as by reason. We know, that, in fact, he took some Counsellors, whom he chose from the University and Citizens of *Paris*. But there is no farther mention of these new statesmen during his reign. He governed by himself; and he kept those whom he employed under him, at so great a distance, that it may be said that he governed alone.

THE successors of *Lewis XI* peaceably enjoyed the same authority. The States of the kingdom, when assembled, pretended to nothing more than a right to make remonstrances, to which the King in general does not reply till long after the separation of the assembly. Under the reigns of *Charles VIII*, *Lewis XII*, *Francis I*, and *Henry II*, we find not a word of the influence of the Parliaments in Government.

ment. The Parliament of *Paris* was of pretty much the same consequence in the kingdom of *France*, as the *Sorbonne* in the *Romish* church. It was an assembly of men respectable for their gravity, for their capacity in civil affairs. Its members, of the same rank in the eyes of the nation as the members of the other Parliaments of the kingdom, modestly classed themselves in the Third-state, and solicited the honour of being its deputies in the assembly of the States.

FROM the minority of the sons of *Henry II*, and from the division between the Princes of the Blood and the *Guises*, the Parliaments date their first intervention in the affairs of State. Both parties were equally desirous of having the people on their side; and the concurrence of the Parliaments creating a prejudice able to determine them, both earnestly strove to gain that concurrence by their deference and regard for those assemblies. But they went no farther than compliments; and sometimes the Princes, sometimes the *Guises*, sometimes the Court and the † Queen-Regent, recalled the Parliament to the end of its institution, and sent it back to the administration of distributive justice, when it would have annexed some real distinction to

† [*Catherine de Medicis*, reliet of *Henry II*, and mother to *Francis I*, *Charles IX*, and *Henry III*.]

the caresses with which it was seduced. The Chancellor *de l'Hopital* roughly rebuked the Parliament of *Paris* for presuming to censure the administration of the Queen-Regent; and to convince it, that it was only a Court of justice, like the other Parliaments of the kingdom; to remind it, that the Court of the King and the Peers was that where the King pleased to sit in the midst of them, he prevailed on the Council to carry young *Charles IX* to *Rouen*, there to hold the bed of justice in which he declared his majority.

ALL the Parliaments were a prey to faction and cabal, to a spirit of revolt, rebellion, and fanaticism, during the troubles of the League. The advocates for those august assemblies have no more right to quote some few magistrates faithful to their duty, than we have to produce the members who withdrew from the House, when they saw *Cromwell* go farther than they intended. All that they can say to extenuate their fault is, that those great bodies were only instruments in the hands of the leaders of a party; that they had no concerted plan to curtail Monarchy, to set the nation at variance with itself. They had reason to hate and despise the weak *Henry III*, but they dared not conceive the idea of punishing him. Though they disgraced him,
they

they ceased not to acknowledge him for their Sovereign. At the same time that they made attempts on the authority of the King, they recommended respect for the regal authority. The *Guises* filled them with horror, when they discovered the steps which we so nobly exceeded at the end of the last century. *Henry III* reigned till his dying hour; and the lawful successor was confirmed in his rights by the very proposal that was made to change the order of succession. The States of the League, assembled for the election of a King, were thrown into disorder and confusion by the mere idea of that election. The Duke of *Mayenne* had scarce been suffered to present it, but he saw his party deserted by the few members of Parliament who were still at *Paris*.

“THE fundamental laws of the *French Monarchy*,” says a learned writer, whose assertions the *French Pamphleteers* give for authorities, “are not written laws. They exist in the hearts of the *French*.” This it is that constitutes the security of the Kings of *France*, and the security of the people of this fine kingdom. Should the Kings make an effort to violate those laws, the general cry of the nation would immediately stop them, and the impossibility of carrying it into execution would prevent them from urging

urging the attempt. The same is a lasting counter-battery on the side of Sovereigns. The hearts of the people are with them, whatever may be the accidental disposition of their minds. Like Generals beloved by their troops, who, to draw the soldier from plunder, and to recall him to his colours, need only pretend that the head-quarters are attacked, the Kings of *France* are sure to see their subjects renounce their greatest errors, and return to obedience and duty, by alarming them for the regal authority, by making them apprehend that it is in danger. Cardinal *de Retz* affirms, that the news of the tragical death of our *Charles I* was of admirable service to the Court of *France*. "The Parliament of *Paris* was afraid, says that Politician, "if not to tread, at least to "be accused of desiring to tread, in the "steps of the *English* Parliament, and stopped short."

You forebode ill to the King's Ministers, and to the Financers, from the impetuous firmness with which the Jesuits were pushed, in spite of the part which the Court took in their favour; and you think, that there will be the same spirit and the same process in the discussions on the Finances. I, Sir, am of a quite contrary opinion; and I see things near. The cause of the Jesuits was an affair

fair of distributive justice, and absolutely in the jurisdiction of the Parliaments of the kingdom. The King could not prevent its being brought, pleaded, and judged before those tribunals, but by evoking it to his Council. That was the measure which would have proved that his Majesty really interested himself in the welfare of the Society of JESUS. As he did not think proper to declare himself in this manner, the Parliament has justly regarded the other small steps taken by the Court, during the carrying on the process, as a grimace granted to the importunity of solicitors. The Companions of JESUS had one plain question to answer: "Are you debtors?" They neither dared nor could deny the fact. It was in the natural order of things to shew them afterwards, that, being debtors, they ought to pay. If they had readily discharged their debts like good and honest merchants, the affair would have been over. But they used chicanery. They alleged some privileges, they made their institute a shield, they made the fate of their creditors depend on their General. From hence resulted an incidental question, which would not have been sought, if they had not imprudently brought it on the carpet. The Parliament would examine whether these privileges were valid, whether they were well
and

and truly possessed and acquired, whether this institute could be reconciled with the laws of the kingdom, with religion, morals, society. The good fathers had nothing for them but this moment. They should have played all their batteries to have had this enquiry prohibited. By temporising, they were ruined. Their existence and all its attributes were discussed *in the spirit of law-suits, with the train and pedantry of chicane, from which obstinacy is inseparable.* There must be a very different process with the King's Ministers, and those whom he protects. They would have to do with the King himself.

IF the Court had imagined that the dispute might become serious, and that the Parliaments might really intend to assume over it the rights of inspection and reformation, one word only would have been sufficient to have silenced them; and this word would have been said. What would become of those august Companies, so exact, so scrupulous as to forms and formalities, if the King summoned them to produce the title by which they take cognisance and demand an account of his administration, by which they set themselves up for the representatives and the organs of the nation, by which they pretend to be something more in the kingdom than Commissioners delegated by
his

his Majesty to keep his books, and labour on such particulars as he does not think proper to reserve to himself?

THE ignorant vulgar may well be induced to believe that the Parliaments succeeded the General-States of the kingdom. But there is not one *Frenchman* tolerably well instructed who does not laugh in the face of a Parliamentarian who is vain enough to say so. There is not even a Parliament which has ventured to let this claim appear. Indeed, what would be more likely to disgust and shock so numerous a nation, than the idea of having for its representatives a few men taken from one of its classes only, and who, very far from being persons of its choice, are put into place without its participation? Could any thing be more absurd in politics, than to take it for granted, that men furnished with their employments, maintained in their employments, removeable and revocable to their employments, by the choice, the favour, the good will of the King, should struggle for the nation against the King, or concur with the King in the name of the nation? Are they not the King's people, the King's servants? †

† [In justice to the members of the Parliament of *Paris*, it should, however, be observed, that, on many occasions, particularly during the present reign, they have

THE assembly of the General-States of France is sunk by disuse. But the General-

have displayed a true sense and spirit of liberty, and though *the King's people, the King's servants*, disdaining to be his slaves, his creatures, they have acted as nobly, as independently, as if they had been the true representatives, the free choice of the nation. But *Lewis XV*, in his arbitrary treatment of them, seems to have surpassed the most despotic of his predecessors. Not contented with twice banishing that Parliament, for presuming to remonstrate against his supreme will, and refusing to register his edicts, he has at length, under a pretence of its jurisdiction being too extensive, in a manner annihilated that hitherto sovereign tribunal, by issuing an edict, in his bed of justice, held at *Paris*, February 22, 1771, branching the Parliament of that capital into six different parliaments, under the denomination of Superior Courts, each Parliament having similar jurisdictions, viz. *Paris, Arras, Blois, Clermont-Ferand, Lyons, Poitiers*. And the other Parliaments, it is conjectured, will undergo the same regulations.

It is remarkable, that this author, in Letter XXI, which is a continuation of this subject, has mentioned as “ a very odious and insupportable burthen to the
 “ people of the distant Provinces, to the burghers of
 “ *Lyons*, the gentlemen of *Forêt*, the ecclesiastics of
 “ *Baujeolois*, who live a hundred leagues from the
 “ capital, the being obliged to go thither in the last
 “ resort,” and prognosticated, as it were, that “ the
 “ Parliament of *Paris* would breathe fire and flame,
 “ and forebode the funeral of Justice and the ruin of her
 “ temple, if some patriot Chancellor should advise the
 “ King to establish at *Lyons*, or in any other city of
 “ that canton, a Sovereign Court for all those small
 “ districts, whose unfortunate inhabitants are obliged
 “ to

General-States are not abrogated, annulled, annihilated. Their last session is not of so remote a date, that the events, which are subsequent to it, are perplexed, or lost, in the obscurity of time. It is of the year 1614, and the Parliament of *Paris*, whom the partisans of *Mary de Medicis*, Mother of *Lewis XIII*, and Regent of the kingdom, had cajoled by allowing it to take the title of *Guardian of Kings*, was then as yet reckoned a portion of the Third-state. In the States, assembled by the League thirty years before, it had been projected to augment the Orders of the nation with two Orders, to make that

“ to come and be fleeced by the attorneys and other harpies of the capital.”

In confirmation of the above opinion of our author, “ the people, *we have been told in the public papers*, seem well pleased with this regulation; alleging, that the Parliaments, notwithstanding their noise about liberty, never stood up for the freedom of the subject.”

Though the capital will suffer by this removal or division of the courts of justice, the effect may probably be beneficial to the rest of the kingdom; but whatever is alleged by the † Chancellor and his friends, public spirit and patriotism alone would never have suggested this measure, if the Parliament of *Paris* had been composed of parasites and courtiers, and had meanly submitted to the arbitrary mandates of their *well-beloved Monarch's mistresses and minions.*]

† M. Maupeou.

of

of the Upper Nobility, and to place the Magistracy between the Lower Nobility and the people. The project was hissed; and no one ventured to propose it in form. Now let me ask, whether those august assemblies have received, since these two æras, either by the rank of the members with which they have been supplied, or by discernment in the choice of their members, or by a new form of reception, or by a concession from the King, or by a solemn deputation from the people, a higher rank, any new prerogatives, or more extensive power?

DID *Lewis XIV.*, who so little regarded the freedom of their debates, who always dictated his will to them magisterially, think of demanding and obtaining the consent of the nation, when he exacted the registering of his declaration in favour of his natural sons? Did the Parliament of *Paris*, by registering it, imagine they were doing any thing more than consigning it to the memory of future generations, and ascertaining the existence of that resolution of the King? Did they conceive that their want of courage and firmness was a loss to the nation; and that for the nation they gave up the unalienable right of chusing its King itself in default of heirs named by the law? If there was reason to ascribe to it so important a rank
in

in the State, I had rather be a rich Burgher of *Paris* than a Grandee of *Poland*, a Peer of *Great Britain*, or a noble *Venetian*. I should only require my wife to be prolific; and I would make my sons so many Counsellors of † Inquest. In three or four generations, the whole *French* nation would be in my family.

At this question, Sir, I seem to take fire. This, I fancy, is owing to its not being foreign to a good *Englishman*. Take care, lest the Sovereign Courts of *France*, or to speak more intelligibly, the grand tribunals of justice in that kingdom, imagine that the name of *Parliament*, which is common to them with the General-States of *Great Britain*, ought to set them on the same level in rank and authority. If this opinion should take root and gain credit, why should not the reverse of this opinion have, one day or other, the same success in *England*? Let us suppose, for a moment, that one of the descendants of *George III* had an army of 40 or 50,000 men at his devotion, and that he had a fancy to compare the Parliament of *Great Britain* with the companies which at

† [In the Parliament of *Paris* there are five Chambers of Inquests, or of Enquiry, consisting of two Presidents and twenty eight Counsellors each.

Atlas Historique]

present style themselves *the Classes of the Parliament of France* *. Would he not have abundance of reasons to place the rights of the first in the same rank with the pretensions of the second? And quoting these again reduced to nothing by the King's firmness in not recognising them, would he scruple to reduce those to the same state? The reflection seems not too far fetched. The freedom of subjects, and the authority of Sovereigns, cease to be secure, as soon as no distinction is made between the different titles under which they hold them. In *France*, the Kings have formed the nation and the monarchy; in *England*, the nation and the monarchy have received by force the laws of a foreigner. There, every thing ought to subsist by con-

* ["The Council believed that they had another subject on which they could reprove the Parliament of *Paris*; many other supreme Courts, which bore the name of Parliaments, entitled themselves *Classes of the Parliament of the kingdom*; a title which the Chancellor *de l' Hopital* had given them, and which signified only the union of the Parliaments in the knowledge and support of the laws: the Parliaments did not pretend to represent the whole State divided into different companies, which all together making a single body constitute the perpetual General-States of the kingdom: this idea would have been very great; but it would have been too much, and the royal authority was enraged at it."]

Age of Lewis XV, chap. 36.]

fidence

fidence and affection. Here, the strongest or the most cunning have played the game, till fortune, declaring for the nation, has enabled her to deliver herself from her oppressors, to free herself from oppression. As freemen we capitulated with the august House of *Hanover*, by taking our King from thence. As long as the island exists, we shall have a right to remind him of our capitulation, and to take care that it be strictly kept with us. A public man, such as you, Sir, are, would think himself obliged to protest in a full house at *Westminster* against the new Parliament of *France*, if the Court of *Versailles* did not incessantly proscribe that unheard of title: *The Classes of the Parliament of France!* In truth, the wise heads of this kingdom have had an interval of childhood; and the Gentlemen of the Classes are in great danger of being thought to have had occasion to be sent back to College. You will see, that all their commotion will end in bringing them to reasonable terms.

*Pulveris exigui jactu commota quiescent.**

VIRG.

* [The event has shewn that the author was here mistaken. No lenient or soothing methods, if such have

- - - - This deadly fray
A cast of scatter'd dust will soon allay.

DRYDEN,

I SHALL now conclude, that I may not wander out of my depth, for which, I know, you will not forgive me. Pray tell our common friend Counsellor *Hawkins*, that I will not delay to give him satisfaction.

I am, &c.

have been tried (the sprinkling of salt, or even of gold-dust) have been able to bring the Parliament to what the Court thinks *reasonable terms*: the last and most effectual argument of Kings has therefore been adopted; the bees have been driven from their hive, and their wings clipped; but though they cannot sting, their humming, most probably, will not cease but with life.

In the above quotation from *Virgil*, the author has substituted *salis* for *pulveris*, which, without improving the sense, spoils the quantity.]



L E T T E R VIII.

TO COLONEL H.

What is the value of men in Courts. Ridiculous idea of the view of a General of an army. Great civil reputation of the Prince de Soubise. Great reputation of the Marshal-Duke de Broglio in every way. Portrait and character of that General. Repartee of the Duke de Brisac concerning him. Short elogium of that Nobleman. Portrait and character of the Marshal's brother the Count. Consequence of his difference with the Prince de Soubise. Decay of the French military establishment. That no good method is taken to restore to it its superiority. Causes of the parade and luxury in the French armies. Reasons for tolerating them. Inconveniences of a total reformation. The author's argument. Particulars of the parade and luxury of the King's Household-troops in the field.

SIR,

THE distinction between man and man seldom obtains in Courts. Of the candidates for places an opinion is formed by persons in power, who are either their friends or their enemies, and who paint them

according to their inclination or their passions. The Prince is a kind of deity, who is supposed powerful enough to effect, with a word, the most complete metamorphoses, to convert, for instance, a Courtier into a General of an army, a man of pleasure into a statesman, an Abbé of quality into a learned Prelate, &c. One might lay a wager that his Ministers think they keep in the drawers of their scrutoires genius and talents in several parcels, and are sure to give to every one a proper quantity of them by telling him what appointment they have allotted him. Seriously, my dear Colonel, it is a pretty general persuasion in Courts, that all the employments of State are so many pieces of clock-work, and that the person employed has nothing to do but to wind them up, a business for which every man, who has hands, is qualified. Every where but at Court, it is imagined that a good General of an army is very scarce, very difficult to be found, and, of consequence, deserves regard when he is found. We *English*, who have only our own plain good-sense, have frankly confessed, that the three kingdoms could not furnish us with such a man; and we have received with gratitude, we have repaid with our whole esteem, Prince *Ferdinand*, whom the King of *Prussia* has been pleased to lend us. But that is, because

cause we are *English*. Every where, but in *England*, no difficulty appears, except in the multitude of Generals that offer their service; and there is not a moment's doubt, but that he who is preferred is equal to his competitors. You will say, that, this being the case, a wise Minister should oblige the candidates to draw lots, that he might not make the losers his enemies. That would be right, if he were not desirous of making the gainer his friend. So let things go on as they do. They go on as they can.

THE Prince *de Soubise* has succeeded Marshal *de Broglie*, who had the command of the army; and M. *de Broglie* has been sent to his estate in *Normandy*. They would laugh here at your astonishment: I have taken great care to conceal mine. But farther. Some days ago, I was in a large company of persons about the Court. The General-Officers who serve under M. *de Soubise* passed in review before them. Every one said something for or against them. A lady, hearing one of those gentlemen named, who is extremely shortsighted, exclaimed; "Alas! poor man! he cannot see beyond his nose. How will he conduct others, not seeing how to conduct himself?" A courtier, one of the purblind Lieutenant-General's friends, retorted on the lady with some rudeness; and

as he saw that the laugh was against him, he undertook to prove, by fair and good arguments, that since we have had spying-glasses and good geographical charts, the eye is a matter of very little consequence in a military man*. I expected to see the orator obliged to shrug his shoulders at a general shout. But this country is to an *Englishman* the country of surprises. The assembly turned against the lady; and the champion began to think, that he was in the right, when the lady begged me to be her Counsel. She is charming, my dear Colonel; and the little resentment which animated all her features, diffused over her charms a vivacity of colouring and expression that enchanted me. I wished to please her, at the hazard of being imprudent; and I was more lucky than wise. They returned to their opinions. My client foresaw her condemnation; and she prevented it by displaying all the reasons of convenience which had determined the father of our warrior to make him an Officer rather than a Magistrate.

* [At the battle of *Blenheim*, Marshal *Tallard* owed his imprisonment to his shortness of sight, mistaking a squadron of the allies for the *French*. "He could not, *says Voltaire*, distinguish objects at the distance of twenty paces. This is a misfortune extremely dangerous to a General."]

THE people, justly prejudiced in the Marshal's favour, are chagrined to see him unemployed. However, though they have little hopes from M. *de Soubise*, they say no ill of him. This Nobleman, who is endowed, in a high degree, with almost every amiable quality, is universally beloved. His generosity, or his magnificence, gains him many partisans; and every one esteems him for his patriotism. He is, without exception, the first man of the court, and the first Nobleman of the kingdom. His birth is an excuse for his ambition to command armies, and the uprightness of his intentions makes his ill success lamented. I will tell you in confidence, that it is ascribed to the resemblance which he makes between the court and the army. The officers who are his intimates are, it is said, brave men. Is there a *French* gentleman, who will not vye in bravery with a grenadier? But they are brave courtiers; and there is a want of experienced officers. A man of his rank is not easily persuaded that he does not understand a trade till he has learned it. He loves to think that there is ill-luck in the case, and that by dint of perseverance he shall tire fortune. However, if I am not much mistaken, should we fail in our negociation, M. *de Soubise* will leave the shepherds to guard the sheep. So much the

F 5

better,

better, so much the worse; or, to say the truth, it is indifferent to me.

ALL have one and the same opinion of Marshal *de Broglie*. His friends and admirers discover in him all the talents which raise the General of an army above the quarrels of a courtier. His enemies and his rivals deny him very few of them: he is undoubtedly the man who enjoys the highest reputation in *France*. He has proved, that he is a great warrior, both for attack and defence, both for battles and retreats, both for encampments and marches. He is passionately fond of his country, of his Prince, and of glory. He has no eagerness for riches. He has a noble soul and a good heart. His disposition is mild, his temper even, his manners decent. Without having either the air or tone of a reformer, he has banished from his army the tastes, the habits, and the fashions of the Court, which seemed to render the want of discipline among the Officers incurable. Without appearing to affect singularity, he has preserved himself from that modish frivolousness, which deforms the best qualities united in most *Frenchmen* of the present age. Affable, polite, even obliging, he has no pride, nor severity, but for the maintenance of military discipline, and for the exactness of the service.

vice. On these subjects his stature sometimes grows gigantic; and he is inexorable.

THE celebrated *Fischer*, who allowed himself in that respect more than the Marshal would grant him, could not by his talents engage his esteem.

MARSHAL of *France* at an age of which there are few instances, he had the singular honour of being raised to that dignity with the concurrence of his seniors. You, Colonel, who know all the force of prejudice in the affair of rank, know how to prize that distinction. A saying of the Duke de * *Brisac*, a Nobleman of approved bravery, whose behaviour would have done honour to the heroic times of *France*, is quoted in praise of the Marshal. One day, when some old General-Officers were murmuring, in his presence, at the rapid rise of M. de *Broglie*, and challenging the preference which the years of their service demanded for them, the Duke, interrupting them, said with vivacity, "Well, Gentle-
" men! if this little man knows more of it
" than we do, why should he not command
" us?"

[* This Nobleman was defeated by the Hereditary Prince of *Brunswick* in the mountains of *Coveldt* in *Westphalia*, August 1, 1759, the very day of the battle of *Minden*.]

THE Count *de Broglio*, the Marshal's younger brother, will appear to you a very great man, if you measure him by the standard of Cardinal *de Richelieu*. No man in the *French* army has more enemies. They apply to him what was said, in the last reign, of the Marquess *de † Feuquieres*, by whom we have some *Memoirs on War*; "that he was the most intrepid Officer in the service, as he always slept in camp among fifty or sixty thousand enemies."

I AM inclined to believe, that the Count *de Broglio* has been more rigorously scrutinised than the Marshal his brother; and that people have been ingenious in discovering faults in him, to avoid that fund of humiliation which would attend the confession of receiving from one family the two first men of the kingdom in their way. It is unanimously allowed, that he possesses military talents in an eminent degree. To them he adds great study of the art of war, with a wonderful readiness for that multitude of particulars which a numerous *French* army affords. He has great penetration, a coolness of action which cannot be discomposed, and a variety of resources

[† "An excellent Officer, who knew the practice and theory of war, but a man of no less chagrin than brightness of genius, the *Aristarchus* of Generals, and sometimes the *Zoilus*. He died in 1711." *Voltaire*.]

very uncommon. But, as I have told you, he is not loved so much as he is esteemed. I imagine, the principal reason is, that not having the command in chief of the King's army, and his employment giving him the exercise of it in part, considering the confidence which his brother has in him, he is in a situation to make some, who think themselves his equals, continually sensible of his superiority. Be that as it may, he is said to be severe in command, inaccessible to advice, peevish at remonstrances, and ready to ascribe them to bad motives. To pass judgment on these accusations, we must take a near view of the *French* army, and learn to what a height want of discipline has risen among the martial Nobility.

THE Count having had a difference with *M. de Soubise*, he saw all the Courtier-Officers take the part of his antagonist. All the Malecontents, whose complaints had been rejected or slighted, justly thought, that this was a favourable opportunity to produce them anew. Some of those military men, whom *Marshal de Saxe* styled "Generals of the toilet" and anti-chamber," and whom a General never employs without lamenting their seniority, which obliged the Minister to place them on the staff, found protectors and apologists: they contrived to make it believed that they had been unjustly treated. At length, the
Prince

Prince *de Soubise* gained the advantage. But the boldest reasoners dare not entirely blame the Count. The Marshal would neither disavow nor abandon his brother. The retreat of these two Lords, which has made so much noise with us, was here the news of a day, of which scarce any thing is known but indistinctly the day after. I must have been lucky in interviews, to have collected what I now transmit you.

My new acquaintance enables me to add a few more articles to my letter. The *French* armies, almost always superior in the last age to the armies of the other powers, have lost that superiority, since the art of war has been brought to perfection among the *Germans*; though, to restore it to them is a matter of mere police of office, for, in the main, the Officer and Soldier are always of the same mould; there is, however, no appearance that they can succeed in it for a long time. Those on whom the arrangement, both as to command and execution, depends, cannot well discover either the disease or the remedy. These insist, that it is the untowardness of the Soldier, those pretend, that it is the want of docility and application in the Officer, which must be corrected. My old warrior is of opinion that both are in the right. But he thinks them all blameable on another account.

count. He is vexed that Ministers and Generals should not know of what importance it is to preserve in the *French* army the genius and character of the nation, and not make a Soldier a galley-slave, an Officer an hireling. This idea requires some explanation; and my brave friend has promised to oblige me with it at his leisure. Do not take as a compliment the assurance which I give you of my receiving his promise with pleasure, principally on your account. The luxury of baggage is an article, on which he would have them cut and slice without mercy.

I YESTERDAY asked a man of quality, who is involved in debt by the equipage and expences of his son, a young man under twenty years of age, for whom he had procured a guidon's commission in the *Gens d'armes*, what could induce the Court not to make an ordonnance in the *Prussian* taste on the attendants and baggage of the Officers. "Alas! he replied, "would you have the King take "from us all that we have left of the ancient *French* Nobility? It is only by the "train that we carry to the army, that we "know our rank. Do you imagine, that we "would purchase the right of going to be "knocked on the head for the King's service, if we were obliged to go thither like "slaves? We are ready to encounter fatigue

“gue and danger, but, by no means, misery. As to his being able to insist literally on our serving, it is proper to give him the right of forcing us to obey. Will he chagrin, for some carriages of the kitchen and the wardrobe, an Officer who has bought, for fifty or sixty thousand livres, the opportunity of spending his fortune and hazarding his life? Abolish that venality of military employments, subject the Officers to the Generals, as they are in *Germany*, and you will lose the first order of the state. None but the poor Nobility will engage in the service. The rich Gentlemen will be Courtiers at *Versailles*, or Lords on their estates. Your Officers then will addict themselves to rapine; they will make a separate band in the Nobility. The profession of arms will become, as it were, Plebeian. The King may ennoble thousands of men, as enlists may make thousands of recruits. But just as these recruits do not become soldiers but by imbibing the genius of the regiment, the ennobled will still be titled vulgar till they have been polished among Gentlemen.”

You see, my dear Colonel, that, for a long time to come, the cards will generally be against *France* at a distance from her frontiers. The provisions and forage will absorb the whole attention of the General; and obliged
to

to communicate to the Commissaries the plan of his marches and encampments, he will be constantly open and exposed to the view of his enemy. Recollect the disposition of the royal army of *Prussia* after the check of **Hockkirck*, where it was forced to abandon its camp all standing, and compare with it that of the army of *France*, when the Hereditary Prince of *Brunswick* had taken its baggage at † *Coesfeld*. The King retreated not above two leagues from Count *Daun*; and there he kept his ground with a double night-guard. A few days after, he had his camp there, as before the misfortune. Marshal *de Contades*, on the contrary, more disconcerted by his loss at *Coesfeld* than by that which he had suffered at *Minden*, would have retired as far as *Frankfort*, if the Marquess *d'Armentieres* had not been within reach of joining him with the camp which he had brought from ‡ before *Munster*.

[* The King of *Prussia* was here surprised in his camp by Marshal *Daun* October 14, 1758. Marshal *Keith* was killed in the action, &c.]

[† Rather *Coveldt*. (See p. 107. Note.) This affair happened August 1, 1759, but the heavy baggage of the *French* army, the military chest of the *Saxons*, and Marshal *de Belleisle*'s famous letters to Marshal *de Contades*, were taken August 5, by Lieut. Gen. *Urff* at *Detmold*.]

[‡ The Marquess *d'Armentieres* brought his camp
fro.

IN the common course of events, the Officers have their *remora* in their baggage. The General himself is obliged in appearance to pay a peculiar attention to this part, that he may not have an army of malecontents. If the battle becomes doubtful, the desire of saving the baggage makes a retreat be meditated, before it is necessary; and frequently a shameful one is made, to make it more secure. He who surrendered *Lauterbourg* to Prince *Charles* in 1744, was only induced to it by the fear that his defence would cost him his baggage.

MARSHAL *d'Etrées*, at the beginning of the campaign of 1757, seemed willing to introduce a reform into this part of the military establishment of *France*. But he had too many connections with the Court to insist rigorously on the execution of his regulations. His * successor in the command was not a man to annex importance to that object, which was very far from affecting the † Prince of the Blood who took his place. The disorder gained ground till M. *de Broglie*, who seemed to have undertaken the cure of it by

from before *Lipstadt*, the blockade of which he raised the day before. *Munster* was at that time in the hands of the *French*.]

[* The Marshal-Duke *de Richelieu*.]

[† The Prince of *Clermont*.]

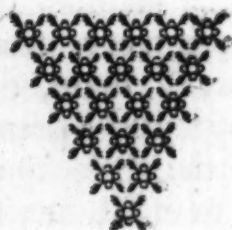
degrees.

degrees. You would scarce believe me, if I gave you the establishment of the grand army, in which were the King's Household troops, last year. An ensign in the foot-guards had some waggons and his coach there. He had fourteen servants, among whom was a clerk of the kitchen. He had his travelling kitchen and his portable side-board of plate. There were some of these gentlemen, who wanted *Paris*-bread for their table, and *Seine*-water for their coffee. The Officers of the life-guards did not dare forbid the guards the use of * *Marquises*. The order was, that every one should have one servant with one sumpter-horse, at least. In that fine troop, composed for the most part of Gentlemen ill-treated by fortune, it was a remarkable contest between the point of honour and the inability to defray the expence of that equipment. Many were obliged to take their leave; some, dreading the suspicion of having seized a pretence for escaping the fatigues of the campaign, only withdrew from the troop to enlist themselves in some regiments of horse and dragoons. Of those who could stay, they who could eat the camp ammunition-bread were considered as *poor Devils* by their comrades.

[* Camp-beds.]

THIS, my dear Colonel, is pretty nearly an answer to your kind letter. Not being of the profession, I have need of your indulgence. When I have any thing to send you worthy your curiosity or attention, I shall consider less my skill in such matters than the pleasure of obliging you. Write to me, without being strict with me as to answers. You may be assured, that my silence will never be owing to any diminution of the friendship which we have mutually promised.

I am, &c.



LET.

LETTER IX.

TO SIR CHARLES G.

Reflections on his friend's rupture with a mistress. Particulars of the girls who are styled at Paris Ladies of the world. Discredit of the conjugal state in that Capital. Insensibility of men of wit and fashion to this late abuse. Dreadful consequences to society of this want of delicacy. To what the present depravity of manners in France may chiefly be attributed. That there are however some men who still adhere to the ancient manners.

SIR,

IRANK among the number of remarkable events, which I love to observe, the receiving at the same time a letter from my best friend, and another from that female relation who is the dearest to me, both, as if they were concerted to give me the most precious hopes, as if I was able to furnish you with some supplies for the state in which I wish to see you both. I form good presages, from this similitude in your ideas; and I would lay a wager, that, when you come to a mutual explanation, you will have a perfect conformity

formity of sentiments. I could have wished, my dear *Charles*, that you had mentioned with more composure your breach with the beautiful and capricious *Polly*; you would more easily have convinced me, that it is irreparable. God forbid, that I should suspect you of dealing with me insincerely! As you have assured me, that the affair is at an end, and that you have absolutely renounced all connection with that imperious woman, I cannot doubt it. But strictly observe, whether you do not deceive yourself, and whether what you think an effort of your reason, be not a momentary flash of your resentment. Examine yourself carefully, my generous friend. My cousin deserves to be happy. She will not give you her hand without her heart; and if you do not make your happiness consist in promoting hers, she will be much to be pitied. Doubt not that the sacrifice which you make her of an old attachment will be meritorious in her sight †, if

† [A lady thoroughly well principled would never be pleased with the sacrifice of a mistress by the man chosen for a husband: Could a virtuous woman receive satisfaction from an open avowal of her lover's having lived in a vicious commerce; from a triumph over a deluded girl rendered miserable by her gallant's honourable attachment? And besides the crime to be pardoned in such a lover, a delicate mind will fear an affection less ardent after a passion of choice bestowed
on

you can prove to her that you have been principally determined to it by your regard for her, and your esteem for her person. But the grand article is to deserve that she should believe you. Virtuous women are, in this respect, wonderfully acute. I will do you all the good offices of a friend, because I take it for granted, that you will not make me give any promise, which you will not firmly ratify; that you will not urge me to make any advance, which I shall be in danger of seeing you disclaim.

It is worse here, my dear *Charles*, than with us. There are *Pollys*, *Fannys*, *Kittys*, who ruin cullies, and afflict virtuous women; and these creatures are not only suffered, but also enjoy a particular protection, if they only deign to enlist themselves in some of the public entertainments. Their houses and their expences are in so high a style, that a very great, powerful, and wealthy Nobleman, having heard the conditions that were offered him by her with whom he had a

on a woman whose loss of innocence had rendered her acceptable.

If such conduct be not seen in the light that is consistent with religion and morality, it is owing to the lamentable depravity of the present times; but some there are, and it is hoped, ever will be, who see beyond the mist that vice and falshood cast over the eyes of the weak and fashionable.]

fancy

fancy to treat, withdrew, telling her, that he was not rich enough to be her gallant. There is one of them who surpasses all that we have heard of the *Lais's*, the *Phrynes*, and the *Floras*. She could, like *Rhodope*, have built pyramids with the profits of her lewdness, if pyramids had been the mode in *France*. You will observe, that here, as with us, these women are sprung from the dregs of the people, and on all accounts are objects of contempt. One of them, who was endeavouring to ruin a Financer, and whom his incredible wealth had emboldened to despise the protection of the Opera, was one day abandoned to the interest of the relations of her cully, who prevailed on the Lieutenant-General of the Police of this Capital to assist them with his authority to recover some of the spoils of their kinsman. The Magistrate summoned the girl to appear before him. She thought it very amazing, that a woman of her rank should be treated like a common strumpet. However, as she suspected that the Managers of the Opera would leave her to extricate herself from this difficulty as well as she could, she threw herself in dishabille into her magnificent chariot, and condescended to appear before the Magistrate *. The audi-

[* This cannot but remind an *English* reader of the late similar proceedings, by some worshipful Magistrates
in

ence was not long. She allowed that she had cost her Financer several millions, and that, besides jewels and furniture of all kinds, she had still in her pocket-book seven hundred thousand livres of his in good notes. "Take your choice, *said the Judge to her,* "either to restore those notes to the family, "who give you up the rest, or to make "your retreat to the † Hospital." The jade had the assurance to complain of injustice, and to allege her privileges. The Magistrate was inflexible; and on her refusal, he ordered the magnificent chariot to convey the lady to the Hospital. "I know, *she said with haughtiness,* "how far your authority extends. "You must, in spite of you, restore me my "liberty in three months; and 700,000 livres are a sufficient recompence for a retreat "of three months." She departed. She alighted at the Hospital. She supported with heroic courage the change of her rich *India*

in our metropolis, against a certain lady as remarkable for her *taste, splendor, and magnificence*, and of the highest reputation for the *bon ton*. In both prosecutions too the Managers of the Opera were, directly or indirectly, concerned. Whether they will terminate in the same manner, time must shew.]

† [A house, which answers to our *Bridewell*, all beggars, dissolute persons, &c. being sent to it. The sick are taken care of, and the healthy are obliged to work. It was established in 1656.]

gown for a coarse stuff sack. But her firmness forsook her at the sight of some dreadful scissars which were to cut off her hair. "Stop," *she cried*. "Rather than consent to lose my hair, I would turn all the notes of the farms into curling-papers." She threw down her pocket-book, resumed her gown, re-entered her chariot, returned to her house; and in the evening, received the visits and applauses of lovers of the highest rank.

MARRIAGE is too little encouraged here, because they who are called Men of Gallantry are a little ashamed of being false to it. A man, who, blushing at his infidelity to a beautiful and virtuous wife, should think himself obliged to withdraw with the criminal object of his attachment, and to go and conceal his libertinism and bad taste among foreigners, would be charged with weakness or folly. "*London, you say*," still talks of "the disgraceful and foolish enterprize of the Lord your relation; and you think that twenty years of wisdom will scarce be sufficient to obtain his pardon." This does honour to our morals. I love to discover in us some real superiority over our neighbours.

A MAN of quality here insults his wife with still more gaiety, and, at most, serves only for the talk of a day. My lady uses reprisals; and my Lord allows, that these
are

are things of course. I know a man of the first rank, who entered his wife's chamber, some time ago, without warning. He found her at an employment, at which she could have wished to have been seen by any one else rather than by him. She was confused, and expressed her confusion. But he interrupted her with warmth: "Yes, *said he*, "you ought to be ashamed of your imprudence. What would have become of you in the world, if any one else had thus surprised you?" This said, he withdrew, carefully shutting the door after him.

PEOPLE of fashion think this relaxation of the strongest tie of men in society, of no consequence. Men of sense do not scruple to presage from it the total ruin of the nation, if things are neglected to be re-established on the basis of morals and religion, if time is given for the contagion to spread, as that of luxury and parade has done, among all ranks of people. The system of dissipation, of which young Miss has an idea given her before marriage, or which young Madam does not delay after the ceremony to adopt, gives those solid men who have antiquated notions of it a distaste for the nuptial union. They devote themselves to celibacy; and the finest branches of the *French* nobility thus wither and die without leaving

ving shoots. Paternal tenderness consumes away, and among others it is extinguished in proportion as the paternity becomes doubtful; and domestic oeconomy, ambition, the love of glory, having no longer their strong hold on the heart of a man of birth, he gives himself up to all his pleasures, to all his tastes, without reserve; he considers as a weakness the idea of imposing on himself the least constraint through a regard for his posterity; he thinks himself born only for enjoyment; he deems it a favour to his heirs to leave them any thing; he dies, as he has lived, in a total indifference about them.

FOR the contempt into which marriage is sunk in this capital, the two sexes, if I mistake not, are pretty nearly alike blameable. *Monsieur* is a man of fashion, engrossed by levity and all its attendants. *Madame* is devoured with curiosity about *Paris*, the Court, and the world, of which she has heard so much said in her convent. Both of them, when they are alone together, have their minds elsewhere, and are mutually tired of each other. Lest hatred should ensue, they tacitly agree not to meet. Both chuse their separate company and connections: soon they forget that they owe each other any thing more than complaisance. They entered into their union with no serious idea of its pains,
of

of its pleasures, of their duties. They signed the contract as at a market, where both observed only their respective advantages. The husband thought that all was over, when he had received the fortune. The wife imagined that every thing was performed, when she saw her wardrobe, her jewels, and her equipage, such as had been promised her. The bridegroom's temper having very soon blazed forth, the young wife, whose heart is not of the party, disdains to be obliging. She is afraid of giving her Sultan an advantage over her, by appearing susceptible of tenderness for his person. He who cannot be withheld from pleasure and amusement, seeks to divert and amuse himself abroad. She thinks herself neglected, she studies to be revenged; and the flatteries of some gallants by profession soon furnish her with means. The husband is persuaded that the deviations of his wife will justify his; and instead of being her censor, he sometimes goes so far as to be her accomplice.

If I could suspect you, my dear *Charles*, of seeing nothing in Lady *Anne* but her great fortune and her enchanting figure, I believe, I should be capable of telling a lye, to prevent her distinguishing you from other persons of your rank. Among all the dissipated *French* of whom I have been discoursing, I

have not found one who was contented. On the contrary, the few well matched who adhere to the ancient manners, and who have had the judicious firmness necessary to confine their wives to them, live honourably, and have reason to be satisfied with their lot. Good husbands, in spite of the fashion, they are good fathers; and they never think themselves happier than in the bosom of their family. Domestic oeconomy and ambition agreeably employ them. They taste the soothing pleasure of not dying wholly. How great soever depravity may be, an inward consciousness of our duties still remains at the bottom of our hearts; and there is no true respect in Society, even in the opinion of the most corrupt, but for the virtuous man who performs those duties with gentility and ease.

I am, &c.



LET.

LETTER X.

TO LADY ANNE S.

True idea of the pleasures and accomplishments of the French Ladies. Education of the English Ladies. How it assures them of satisfaction in Society. Education of a young Lady of quality in France. Of what little service it is to her in the world. Absurdity of the education of Convents. How the duties of the mistress of a family are neglected. How they contribute to the happiness of a virtuous woman. Mistake of the Marchioness de Maintenon in the royal establishment of St. Cyr. Censure of the education given to young Ladies in that house. How little attention is there paid to their destination. Recommendation in favour of Sir Charles.

DEAR COUSIN,

I SHOULD lose much of the high idea which I have of the exactness of your judgment, if you were well acquainted with the *French Ladies*, and should then still be jealous of the reputation which they justly have, of being extremely amiable. I would scarce allow this jealousy to the Countess

of C. in whom Nature seems to have atoned, at the expence of the mind, for her prodigality as to personal accomplishments. Her illustrious sister, who is not inferior to her in beauty, would only have had compassion for these *French Ladies* whom you think deserving of envy. Assure yourself, my fair cousin, that that fluttering gaiety and vivacity which delight us so much, conduce not at all to their own satisfaction. When once these lovely women are accustomed to the encomiums which their charms procure them, they perceive that they deposit in Society all they possess, and that Society makes them no solid return. The dissipated life which had so many allurements for them, when they entered into the world, does not fail to appear to them as fatiguing as it really is. The circles and assemblies, of which they are the ornament, soon present them nothing more than the necessity of constraint, that they may keep to themselves the weariness which they carry thither. Often reduced to wish for solitude, they are no sooner in it, than the void which is in their minds makes them find it insupportable, from the difficulty of recollecting and employing themselves in it. Like a Comedian, who is not diverted with the diversion which he occasions, they regret being condemned to communicate a pleasure which they

they do not partake; and they lament their not having received from a different education other tastes, other talents, and other manners.

THE *English* Ladies are trained from their tenderest youth to the articles of domestic œconomy, to the works of the needle, to good reading. We think not that they should be ignorant of history and geography, and that they should know nothing of religion but the catechism of children. Most of them learn music and drawing. More retired than the *French* Ladies, they cannot but be pleased with retirement, as they know both how to amuse and employ themselves. The parents scruple not to interrogate, to listen to them, on the plans which they form before marriage, for the management of a family, for the education of children. They talk to them with no less confidence on the methods and the hopes to deserve a good husband, than they avoid with care to inspire them with the coquetry which increases the crowd of lovers. The domestic embarrassments, the cares which a family requires, when they are involved in them, neither surprise nor chagrin them, because they were prepared for them long before; because at the same time when they were made acquainted with the duties of that state, they were furnished with proper instructions to discharge

them with as much ease as dignity. At every period of her life, an *English* Lady finds occupations suitable to her taste, which time never fails to vary. She enjoys even in her old-age some sweets of Society; because she has made herself in Society some permanent connections. As she brought thither solid endowments, with the charms of her mind and person, the diminution, or the loss, of the latter does not deprive her of the esteem in which she was held. If you extend this parallel more minutely, you will cease, my fair Cousin, to be jealous. Can the never living for one-self be styled living?

A *French* young Lady, at sixteen or seventeen years of age, sometimes sooner, goes from a convent into the world. You know what a convent is. The Nuns, with whom she has lived ever since her childhood, restore her to her parents, who frequently the same day deliver her to a husband, whom she knows by having received some frigid compliments from him through a grate. She knows very well how to say her beads, the *angelus*, the *benedicite*, the thanksgivings. She has learned a hundred ways of recommending herself to the saint whose name she bears, to her guardian-angel, to the patron-saints of the order and of the convent. She has read more than once some extracts of the Legend. She knows a
number

number of marvellous tricks, which dæmons and spirits play in this lower world. She is ignorant of none of those little pastimes, with which the imagination and judgment of girls are exercised. She can colour images, and adorn with straw and gilt paper some *Agnus-Deis* and relics, as elegantly as a professed nun. Perhaps she also knows how to embroider a flower in gold or silver on silk, and in thread on cloth, to work *a la Marly*, to make buckles of ribbons, and even to knit stockings. She has received, in the great parlour, some lessons of the minuet and country-dance; she makes admirably well the most profound curtsies. Lastly, if she is found to have a taste and talent for music, the Matron Grand-chantress will have taken pleasure in teaching her to sol-fa, and she will sing most devoutly little hymns and long canticles.

SEE, Madam, how far they go†. The knowledge, the talents, the attainments of a young *French*-woman of quality, who has

† It is amazing, that this education of girls in convents should maintain its credit so long. But it is inconceivable, that our neighbours, who are so happy as not to have cloysters among them for this purpose, should envy the *French* their blindness, and send their children into the convents of *Flanders* and *Paris*. What cannot the contagion of fashion effect? 'The Ladies of *Brabant*, the *Dutch* catholics, will be mothers in the *French* mode.

been

been well educated! The mother glories in having a daughter so well formed for the world; she pretends to discover that she does not hold up her head, that she has a shoulder too high, or an awkward air, to have it thought, that she may still be improved, so as to become a prodigy. The young Lady, enriched with such an ample collection of fine things, is placed at the head of a numerous and splendid household, is presented at Court, introduced into all companies, given up to the great world, and it is recommended to her to become the mother of a family within the year.

Do not imagine, my dear Cousin, that a prudent mother-in-law, and some female relations, equally furnished with reason and experience, will concur, by their advice and instructions, to train the bride to her new state. That would absolutely subvert the mode. The good Ladies knew no more of it than this novice, when they entered into the same state, and they remember that they would have been highly offended with those female *Mentors* who should have taken upon them to be their preceptors. They call on time and experience to give the finish to their new relation. The converse of the world soon removed the stiff and unnatural air of the convent. They soon learned the games of hazard and commerce,

merce, which are the life of good company. A few days were sufficient to teach them the genteel employment of knotting, or the rich amusement of making old gold with new lace. A dozen modish pamphlets soon made them forget the lectures of the cloyster, and even the catechism. Before they had frequented public places three months, their heads were full of gallant and amorous verses, and they sung with taste the prettiest opera airs. Lastly, some hair-dressing valets, and some elegant milliners, delivered them from the heavy fatigue of the toilet. Nurses, governesses, tutors, colleges, and convents, scarce suffered them to perceive that they were mothers. The young woman must extricate herself, as they did, as well as she is able. She must, like them, avail herself, as much as she can, of her husband's patience, must find, in her own genius, or among the friends of the other sex, whom she will know how to procure, the resources which a pretty woman can provide herself against the ill-humour of a jealous mate, against the caprices of play, and for her most extravagant fancies. When she is no longer of an age to figure in the gay world, she must, after the example of other women of her rank, apply herself to devotion, where a hundred minute exercises

exercifes will divide her time, and will not afford her leifure to be weary.

AMONG the small number of judicious *Frenchmen* with whom I am connected, I have not found one who does not view with pity the ridiculous custom of entrusting to recluses, to women who had never any knowledge of the world, the education of such as are to be its support and ornament. Can any thing indeed be more absurd than to be sent for instruction in the duties of the nuptial state into mansions where a single life is deemed the state of supreme perfection, where it is a crime to think of marriage, where the slightest speculation on the appointment and suitableness of the two sexes is threatened with the pains of hell? A rich *Turk* would be very happy to recruit his seraglio from these *French* seminaries. He is fond of an *Agnes*; and this his women know sufficiently to answer his purpose. But for a *Frenchman*, who should find his equal and his companion in his wife, who should divide with her the government of the family, one can scarce imagine an education for the sex more irreconcilable with common sense.

How I love the way of thinking of the Countess, your mother, on this subject so important to Government and Society! I applaud now, still more than I did before my journey,

journey, the aversion which she has for the boarding-schools, calling themselves *French*, which are so much increased in the neighbourhood of *London* within the last forty years. I am not more enamoured than that illustrious Lady, with our *ancient usages and customs*; and I will never * require her, who shall honour me with her hand, to sacrifice to the child her fine neck, after having sacrificed to the father her fine shape. But I agree with my Lady that a daughter may, without a crime, have only a pious tenderness for the mother, who, having fortune enough to give her an education suitable to her birth, refuses to take upon herself the care of it.

AN application to domestic concerns, and the education of her children, ought to constitute the happiness of a woman of rank. As

* Our *Englishman* is very indulgent. He is not such an enemy to fashion as he imagines. Different times, different manners! It is related of Queen *Blanche* of *Castile*, mother of *St. Lewis*, that she could not bear that a Lady, affected with the cries of the little *Lewis*, should give him her breast, while she (the mother) lay extremely ill of a fever. Guessing, when the fit was over, the reason of the child's disgust for the scalding milk which she offered him, she put her finger into his mouth, and made him bring up the other milk with which he had been glutted; bitterly complaining that any one should presume to divide with her the rights of a mother. The Ladies of the present age will think this vulgar to the lowest degree.

the exercise of the chace and labour give a relish to good cheer, the employments with which a worthy mistress of a family is occupied in her house, give a relish to the pleasures which are offered her by Society. She passes from the one to the other with a never-failing vivacity. She is never surpris'd by weariness or disgust, because she knows how to prevent them by diverting them in time. This, Madam, is a lot which the *French Ladies* would have reason to envy, if they knew it. But by a prodigy more astonishing in this ingenious nation than in any other, there is not the least idea of it, even in the provinces. Ten thousand recluses, already sufficiently hurtful to Society, by the idle piety which takes them from the destination of their sex, completely finish all the mischief of which they are capable, by receiving tribute from the slothful pride of a hundred-thousand mothers. There are no daughters of noble families educated in their fathers houses, but those whose parents are not in circumstances to pay for their board in a convent.

THE ingenious and generous Marchioness *de Maintenon* was strangely mistaken as to the design of her establishment of St. † *Cyr*, when

[† St. *Cyr* was built at the end of the park at *Versailles* in 1686.]

she chose from the old Nuns, who were most conversant in monkish speculations, the Governesses of the young Ladies whom she proposed to make models for mistresses of noble families in the provinces of *France*. Your Ladyship has an idea of that magnificent institution, so worthy of a great King, so honourable a proof of his regard for his Nobility. It still exists in all its splendor. But it has the fate which the imprudence of its foundress might have expected: it does not answer its intention.

LEWIS XIV approved of the plan formed by the Marchioness of collecting together for one common education two or three hundred young Ladies of noble families not indebted to fortune, of instructing them, from the age of six to that of eighteen, in matters suitable to their birth, and of portioning them with four hundred pounds sterling each, in order to dispose of them to Gentlemen of small estates, who would eagerly solicit their hands. The portion was to be a kind of royal subsidy in constant circulation for the Nobility in strait circumstances; and the good education of the young Lady was to diffuse, as one may say, its fragrance and its influence many leagues round the neighbourhood of her husband's habitation. This was a method admirably contrived to convey into the remotest parts

parts of the country the beneficence of the Monarch and the politeness of his Court.

BUT they should have considered what virtues and talents a Gentleman who makes the most of his little estate, and who is ambitious to improve it, in order that he may the better educate his children, would wish in his wife. It was natural to think, that a young person educated like a Court-Lady, would be, notwithstanding her portion, a bad acquisition for a Country-Gentleman, and that she herself would either go with regret, or would find herself misplaced in the house of such a husband. *The poor Damsels of St. Cyr*, who should have been instructed in rural labours and œconomy, in the duties of a mistress of a noble but not wealthy family, in the employments of *Solomon's virtuous woman*, by noble widows made wise by experience, were placed under the lessons and direction of a few old Nuns, whose only merit was their constrained chastity and their ostentatious devotion. To sew, to embroider, to sing, to speak pure *French*, to declaim, with grace, nature, and warmth, some scenes of pious tragedies; all these are of some value, even in a cottage. But the young woman, who carries thither no other endowments, must soon be an insupportable burthen to the most patient husband. The Country-Gentlemen
were

were afraid of the yoke which these Lady *Honestas* would make them bear, proud of the protection of the Court and of their elegant education. They chuse rather to connect themselves with a Country-Girl, less amusing and more useful, who can neither sing with taste, nor declaim with grace, who has in her speech a provincial accent, and whose highest reading is her prayer-book; but who can review, every evening, the sheep which the shepherd brings back to the fold, who knows the number of cattle that are driven to the fields and to the meadows, who goes herself to collect the eggs of her hens, and to take inspection of their broods, who sees her cows milked, and the cream taken off, the butter churned, the corn laid up, the sacks measured, who is, in short, in domestic oeconomy a second and confidante, in labour a companion, and who promises to educate his children in the spirit of their station, in the sphere which their fortune points out to them. The poor Damsels of St. Cyr are only addressed by men who are rich enough to require in a wife nothing but virtue.

CONGRATULATE yourself, my fair Cousin, on being born in a country where wisdom is only a part of the personal endowments which a young lady of quality brings into her husband's

band's house. Enjoy the delightful idea with which you must be inspired by the certainty of constituting the happiness of him on whom you shall bestow your esteem and friendship. I have a higher opinion than ever of Sir *Charles G.* my best friend, since I know that he is acquainted with your value. He has written me many things to which I wish that you would give credit. Of all my acquaintance he is the man whom I think the most deserving of the good graces of Lady *Anne*, and of the Countess her mother; and so deeply am I interested for my fair relation, that I cordially urge her to receive the address of this worthy man with the attention which it merits. I write on this subject to your illustrious mother, and send her some intelligence well worthy of your curiosity. As I know you to be equally generous and discreet, I have not required it to be kept secret from you. I shall soon hear whether you are exact in the course of proceedings.

I am, &c.

LET.

LETTER XI.

TO THE EARL OF B.

The author writes for the pleasure of writing, Disposition of the Court and people of France with regard to peace. Disadvantageous idea of the East-India Company. Sir Robert's opinion of the conquests. Fragment of a new and scarce book concerning those on the coast of Africa. Reflections on the British debt, how it renders a lasting peace necessary. Dreadful prospect of a general reduction in England in consequence of the discredit of paper-money. Parallel of England, on the present footing, with France in 1720. Wise and sure policy of Gustavus-Adolphus.

MY LORD,

TO-MORROW I am to visit my Friend the Financer at his hermitage. I shall wait with impatience for the next courier, in order to send your Lordship an exact account of my conversation with him. Encouraged not to burden my memory by the obliging complaisance which has made you think my letter relating to him short, I shall endeavour to spare nothing but words. I have the honour to wire to your Lordship at present, merely

merely for the pleasure of writing to you. When I apply myself to that employment, I think myself with you in your closet, and I ruminate, if I may so say, the delicious hours which I devoured, when the friend of my King condescended to be mine, and to permit me to approve myself his. As my Lord-Duke acquaints you with the whole progress of his negociation, you expect nothing from me. What I can tell you of it, and what a politician of his rank can scarce believe, is, that, excepting the article of the fishery, and that of the sugar-islands, the Court of *Versailles* agrees sincerely to our demands. At the time of the Family-Compact, the *French* Ministry imagined *Spain* better prepared for defence, and the wounds of the former reign more easy to heal. They have not here the least idea of our intending to keep the † *Havannah*. Concerning that conquest there is no more to settle than concerning *Martinico* and *Guadeloupe*: it is the national cry, and the last word of the Ministry. We shall profit by the guaranty which his Most Christian Majesty has given to the Stock-holders of the *East-India* Company.

† [An account of the reduction of the *Havannah* was received in *England*, *Sept.* 29, 1762, three weeks after the Duke of *Bedford*'s arrival at *Paris*.]

The Monarch will have their settlements in *Asia* restored to them; because the State must otherwise take upon herself a capital of between four and six millions sterling, to which the actions amounted. However, it may be questioned, whether that Company so brilliant, twenty years ago, when the *Sieur Dupleix* had the government of their settlements, will be able to recover the losses in which it has been involved by the ignorant successors of that able Governor. The Company have no notion of the general interest, and less still of that of the nation. The Directors, solely attentive to their own enriching, and to the securing to themselves the wealth acquired during their direction, have no regard but to interest, recommendations, presents, in the distribution of employments. The * *Irishman* who carried on and completed the prodigy of the surrender of *Pondicherry*, still finds some protectors †. It is said, that he did not suffer all his Pagodas and Rupees to be taken. All who are interested, are for endeavouring to recover in whole or

* [General Lally.]

† [He was, however, beheaded at the *Greve*, May 10, 1766, by the sentence of the Parliament, and his effects confiscated to the King, &c. He is supposed to have fallen a victim to Court-intrigues, to screen others.]

in part their old disbursements, and utterly reject the advice to repair their losses by new advances. It is an old shattered vessel, which the Court would gladly keep in commission; but of which the boldest seamen refuse to take the command. Whatever may become of it, for the restoring of *Pondicherry* we shall be recompensed by the cession of the coast of *Africa*. I see nothing to make me suspect, that, with regard to that sacrifice, the *French* will avail themselves of restrictions and pretences to return. I think, nevertheless, my Lord, that if with us a regard be not due to the prejudices of the people, the King's good servants should counsel him to display his generosity, by declining some acquisitions, of which, it is probable, *France* cannot bear the deprivation nor digest the loss. The more reason we have, from the successes of our arms, to expect an advantageous peace, the more does the state of our finances require us to think of making it solid and lasting; and for such a peace we shall hope in vain, if we abuse our present superiority. We have seen *Spain* continually intriguing, projecting, for fifty years past, to recover *Gibraltar*, which seems a wasp which we keep fastened to the hive, to molest or disquiet the bees. We have seen her seize the first opportunity of breaking the *Affiento* contract,

† contract, merely because we forced her to make it with us in preference. How can we flatter ourselves, that *France* will suffer herself to depend on us, and on the greediness of our merchants; for the purchase of negroes, of which she makes so large a consumption in her sugar and indigo plantations? I have it from good hands, that they already perceive here the future cavils on this shameful part of our *African* commerce, which will again become a market of human flesh; and able speculatists style that coast “the *Silesia* of their “*Britannic* and Most Christian Majesties.”

THE following is an extract which I think well worthy of your Lordship’s curiosity, on the inconveniences and advantages of this conquest. An *Englishman* is supposed to speak :

“THE *French* settlement of *Senegal*, says he, “is valued at an annual produce of a thousand and sometimes twelve hundred negroes. The gum-trade is an object of “little consequence to us, since the chiefs “of our factory, by sending their factors up “to *Gambra*, intercept in their route the “*Moorish* and *Mandingo* merchants who “carry their gums to the fair of the *Desert*.”

† [A contract made with the *Spanish* Government by the *English African* Company, in the reign of *James II*, for supplying the *Spanish West Indies* with negroes.]

“ To preserve that settlement, without putting themselves to the expence of troops
“ and fortresses, the *French* made themselves tributary to *Brak* and *Damel*, two
“ petty Negro Kings on the continent; and they were to keep some magazines constantly furnished in the island of *Goree*,
“ and a number of barks for the traffic, and several factories on both the banks of the *Senegal*. All these expences obliged the *French*
“ Company to set a much higher price on its negroes than was fixed by our merchants on the negroes of our traffic of
“ *James-Fort* and *Cape-Coast*. On succeeding the *French* in their possessions, we must enter on the expences which they had
“ there to support. We must treat on the same footing, as they did, with the negroes
“ of those cantons. The *French* Company has accustomed them to *French* brandy,
“ to the *Siameses* of *Rouen*, to combs of the manufacture of *Normandy*, to cloves from
“ *Tindor* and *Ternate*, to iron and copperware of the lowest price. Would they
“ have these objects of barter from *England*? We have neither the spinning of hemp nor
“ of cotton. Our gin and rum will not make amends for brandy. Our painted
“ calicoes are of too high a price to be substituted for the *Siameses*. Our combs, our
“ works

“ works of steel and tempered iron, are too
“ well wrought and too dear. We must
“ therefore purchase goods to barter, and
“ we shall be no more than factors in the
“ conquered settlement.

“ As soon as the *French* shall be entirely
“ deprived of the traffic of negroes, they
“ will magnify the advantage, and will be
“ irritated at their loss. The resentment of
“ the nation will animate the jealousy and
“ hopes of individuals, who, less greedy of
“ great gain than the Company, will under-
“ take the trade in contraband. Against
“ these interlopers what will our forts and
“ factories avail us? I know only two reme-
“ dies for this evil; and each is itself an
“ evil. The one is, to endeavour to force the
“ negroes, as we force the savage *Canadians*,
“ to trade only with us. The other is, con-
“ stantly to employ some guarda-costas and
“ armed vessels, which may disperse the smug-
“ glers. But if the King of *Spain*, by the most
“ positive orders and the most severe police,
“ cannot prevent his subjects from carrying
“ on a contraband trade with us and the
“ *French*, how shall we make our prohibi-
“ tions on that head observed by people ab-
“ solutely independent on us, and whom it
“ is impossible for us to hem in as we do
“ the *Canadians*? We must therefore be at

“ perpetual war with people whom only the
“ convenience of trade detains on the sea-
“ coasts. They have behind them an immense
“ continent and numerous nations. It re-
“ mains, that we drive from the coasts the
“ interpolers. That is very difficult, and
“ the sea there is very rough. Large ships
“ cannot approach without danger: they
“ will be braved by the smuggling vessels al-
“ ways stouter than our stoutest barks. They
“ have no occasion to enter any road. The
“ negroes swim two leagues off to sea, and
“ they go much farther, in the roughest sea
“ and the stormiest weather, with their ca-
“ noes. Signals being once concerted, we
“ shall be at an useless expence in our ships
“ and forts. Our *African* Company, reduced
“ to the same condition as the *French* Com-
“ pany, will find itself incommoded by its
“ numerous factories; it will abandon some,
“ and neglect others; and this trade, so ad-
“ vantageous to us while it had just-limits,
“ will fall to decay, will even become a bur-
“ then, as soon as it shall be unlimited.”

THIS pretended *Englishman* is incontestably
a partisan of our enemies; he will present
only one of the faces of the medal. However,
my Lord, there is, I think, in his reasoning
a fund of truth which the most sanguine
Englishman could not mistake. The *French*
Company,

Company, retaking possession of its settlement, will not change its method. The most fickle and inconstant men in the world seem to pique themselves on persevering in their faults. It will still leave the *French Colonies* in want of negroes; it will still set a high price on those with which it will furnish them; we shall still be the resource of the colonists, who will the more favour us in our trade with them, as the ordonnances of their Sovereign restrain them from it, at the same time that their wants lay them under a necessity of violating his prohibitions.

WE may, without undervaluing the credit of the nation, take it for granted, that our Stock-holders of the first rank, as well natives as foreigners, did not engage in new loans, during the war, but from a fear of hastening our bankruptcy, by refusing us that assistance. They affected security, in order to produce it in others. Can it be doubted but that, after the peace, they will attentively pry into the state of our funds, in order to regulate their reprisals upon them? They will proceed little by little, in order to flatter us with hopes of bearing up against every thing. We shall make an effort to inspire a new confidence by our care; by repeated efforts we shall at length be exhausted, the first signal of which will communicate

itself to all the Stock-holders, great and small; and the multitude will oblige caution to vanish. Your Lordship will be aware of what we should be capable by sea and land, if, our paper-credit being lost, we were again reduced to have only gold and silver for a symbol of riches and the instrument of commerce. What a horrible confusion in *Great Britain*! What a dreadful revolution in the fortune both of the State and of individuals! I suppose, our substance would on a sudden be diminished more than six eighths, estates real and personal, manual labour, the price of provisions, taxes and imposts, diminished in proportion. How could we preserve our superiority on the sea, protect our commerce, defend our colonies, and provide for the diversion which our enemy will force us to furnish him on the continent? How supply the subsidies on which all the influence which we have in *Germany* depends †? Putting the

† [These questions, many true *Englishmen* will think, may be easily answered, viz. by withdrawing all those subsidies, and by joining in no diversion on the continent, but by confining our attention to our marine, to that force which, under proper management, will at least defend us, and of which all the expence is disbursed among ourselves. Our colonies too, properly encouraged and duly subordinate, will not only defend themselves, but also be an increasing source of wealth and commerce to the mother-country.]

efforts

efforts of zeal and animosity at their utmost height, the nation could not, in these last years of the war, have given the State more than five, or, at most, six millions sterling, from all the taxes and contributions; and in each of those years, the State wanted nineteen. Paper no longer being current, the void which the discredit of it would occasion in the three Kingdoms would have an influence on the receipt as well as on the assessments. Every thing but the total of the expence would be altered. I lose myself in the shocking speculation.

YOUR Lordship is deceived, if, to cheer you, the fall of paper in *France* is quoted, at the time of the ruin of *Laz*'s system, and the readiness with which the Kingdom recovered from that crisis. The difference in the situation of the two Monarchies is prodigious; and the genius, the character, of the two nations, is as different. The good heads and good purses of *France* preserved themselves from the convulsion, which, besides, lasted only a few months. Marshal *de Villars* † was only the interpreter and imitator

† The Marshal loudly declaring his bad opinion of the system, the Duke-Regent thought that it was of consequence to his project to have it countenanced by this great Crown-Officer; and therefore sent *Laz* to make him a visit, and to talk with him. The Marshal

of many thousands of rich and prudent men, who did not suffer themselves to be dazzled by that *Scotchman*. In a word, the madness for notes attacked none but people whose indigence was utterly indifferent to the State, which found means to recruit itself with their spoils. Few foreigners embarked with these imprudent *Frenchmen*; and this was a misfortune to *France*, who being able to secure herself after the success of her bubble, might, by involving them in her bankruptcy, have enriched herself with impunity by their losses. After the absolute ruin of the system, concealed gold and silver circulated again. The Kingdom came off with the loss of about a fifth of its specie, which some artful foreigners shared among themselves, together with those of its neighbours, who had ventured to undertake the making false notes. In the words of *the Testament of Alberoni*, “ the
 “ reign of *Law*’s system brought in to the
 “ King the money of the people, and transferred the void in the King’s treasury into
 “ the purses of individuals: it was the management of a quack, who removes the

listened to the *Scotchman*, and only gave him for answer, that “ he was not acquainted with the *French*;
 “ that he had undertaken to drive a chariot drawn by
 “ unruly horses, who would soon throw him from the
 “ box, and trample him under their feet.”

“ leanness

“leanness of the face into the limbs, and
“who diffuses over the whole body the hu-
“mours with which the head was troubled.”

WE should be the happiest of people, if we had no other disadvantages to apprehend. The new sources of commerce, which our conquests open to us, would soon recover the State and the nation from that shock, and the Government being no longer straitened in establishing a new oeconomical system, it might, after some years, offer to new creditors securities so strong, that, in spite of their experience, they might confide in them. Our laws, our constitution, our character, will restore our credit, in spite of all our rivals and all our enemies, when we shall appear a methodical people and true merchants.

BUT, my Lord, please to observe, that the first foundations of the national debt were laid above sixty years ago; and that it is a vast edifice, in which the nation, and almost the whole of *Europe*, are assembled. All the *English* are interested in the public funds, for at least four-sixths of their substance. Many are so for more. As to the greatness and power which we now possess, we cannot sink in our real credit, without descending, in the balance of *Europe*, below our ancient mediocrity in the reigns of the *Stuarts*.

SINCE the origin of paper, all the estates in *Great Britain* have changed their nature, and are five times less valuable. Such has been the confidence, that in contracts no mention has been made of the instruments of purchase or exchange. Our way of reckoning remains the same. Eighteen or twenty millions sterling in gold and silver give their possessors no advantage over the possessors of a hundred and fifty or a hundred and sixty millions in paper. A note of thirty-two or thirty-three pounds sterling has always been on a par with a weighty mark of gold; and it has constantly been given and received for it, before and since the various advances of labour and the materials of the paper-mine. Mortgages, ground-rents, annuities, quit-rents, dowries, jointures, entails, simple and compound leases, in short, all the objects of property exist in accounts at the time when gold and silver were the only money that was current. We reckon five æras, at each of which estates of every nature, and of every kind, have risen in value in proportion to the increase of the number of notes. At each of these periods, and during their continuance, estates have changed hands; they have been sold, bought, mortgaged, leased out, at different prices. How, my Lord, could the knots and tangles of those reductions be untwisted,

twisted, if the loss of the national credit should make a reduction necessary?

NOTHING therefore should be more dearly prized by the *British* Ministry than the maintenance of peace, which is the only time in which we can baffle and defy the bad designs of our rivals and our enemies, and preserve the confidence both of natives and foreigners. *Gustavus Adolphus*, when master of Germany, from the *Elbe* to the *Rhine*, had his eyes fixed on *Pomerania*. He only desired, as the fruit of his conquests, one small province. But he thought himself sure of possessing it afterwards by degrees. Let us set bounds to our ambition, let us set none to our duration. The last Ministry did not hesitate to adopt the system of subsidies, which they condemned in the former, while they were their opposers. If they were still in power, they would, like the new Ministry, be desirous of peace, and they would conduct it more boldly. It is only for the people to give way to their passions in what regards their interests. Those who have the honour to govern them ought to shew themselves worthy of it by rendering them happy, even in spite of themselves.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XII.

TO THE BISHOP OF R.

Humourous excuses for some unguarded expressions in Letter III relating to the Clergy. A lucky accidental opportunity of knowing the Jesuits by themselves. Portrait of an honest Ex-Jesuit. Letter to that extraordinary man from a Doctor of the Sorbonne. A Bishop's strange reason for allowing the Jesuits some missions in his diocese. Plan of the letter which the Ex-Jesuit should write to that Prelate. His letter to the Marquess of N. By what right he deems himself excusable for having been a good Jesuit. Prosecution of the Jesuits and that of the Knights-Templars compared. Why the proceedings against the former were not violent. That the true subaltern Jesuits could have wished for punishments. Insufficiency of the pension assigned to the disbanded Jesuits. M. le Franc's scruples as to the payment for masses. What opinion he has of the oath required by the Parliament. Remarkable comparison of the General of the Jesuits.

Mr

MY LORD,

I FLATTER myself, that your resentment will not be proof against the effort which I have made for your service. Find among good *Englishmen* one besides myself who could, out of regard to your Lordship, bring himself with a good grace to be the friend and protector of a Jesuit; then, after you have found him, you may be allowed to suspect me of having included your Lordship among that respectable Clergy, to whom I said, perhaps improperly, that "obstinacy is natural." * Before I was rebuked, I had deserved not to be so. I do not, however, repent of it; and you give your reprimands so gently, you temper them with so much goodness, that I should be sorry not to have received mine.

I WAS, some days ago, at the Marquess of N's, whose brother is one of the Fathers of the *Gallican* Church. This Gentleman is a Courtier of the highest merit, who has only the appearance of the national turn for frivolousness. He has a known integrity, and a piety equally generous and solid. We were by ourselves,

* See p. 35.

and deeply engaged in an interesting conversation, when a servant came in to announce M. *le Franc*, a Jesuit. The Marquess answering, that "he would receive his visit in a moment," I took it as a hint for me to retire, and endeavoured to do so. He stopped me. "You need not withdraw, *said he*. "This Gentleman is a Jesuit, a good Christian, and a good *Frenchman*. He was a Missionary five and twenty years in *Asia* and *America*. He swears, that he has never been admitted into the secret of the Society, he protests, that the only order he ever received from his General was, to endeavour to get himself killed by the *Caribbees* and the *Malabars* for the greater glory of God and of the Society of Jesus. Like a disbanded Officer, who has no fortune but his sword, and who seeks service, he intreats me to recommend him to a living which my brother has in his gift." Without telling the Marquess, that I would gladly be acquainted with his Christian-Jesuit, I begged that he might not be kept waiting in the antichamber. On his entering, I beheld a man about sixty years of age, of the most engaging aspect. He had so gentle a look, that at first I was tempted to believe that he was a wolf very studious to conceal himself in sheep's cloathing. See what prejudice is! I never should

should have had this idea, if I had not known that this man was a Jesuit. I think that it was false, that it made me unjust to him, and I will repair the fault by my readiness to serve him.

"You have taken a journey, Sir, in a manner to no purpose," *said the Marquess*. "My brother sat out, a few days ago, to make a tour to his abbey." "I did not come to present myself to his Lordship," *replied the Ecclesiastic*. "I have more need of your protection, Sir, than you imagine, and I thought I ought to leave my application to none but myself, I was kindly received by Mr. Attorney-General. Could you have imagined that my Lord has been less favourable to me than to a Member of Parliament? Here is the answer which I have received from his Chaplain." The Marquess took the paper, which he was desired to read at his leisure, as it was only a copy. He promised all his good offices; and we entered into conversation. I was very well pleased with the Ex-Jesuit, insomuch that I promised him to interest in his favour a certain Lady who is one of mine and the Bishop's friends. The Marquess desired that he would write to that Prelate, and acquaint him with what he wrote, as well as with the answer he should receive.

"The

“THE fate of this good man interests you,”
said my friend, when he had withdrawn, “and
“I think, not without reason. Since you
“share with me in his troubles, you ought to
“share in his confidence. Let us see this
“writing.”



“ L E T T E R

“ FROM MR. ABBÉ N. DOCTOR OF THE
SORBONNE, TO M. LeFRANC.

“ SIR,

“ WHEN I delivered your letter to his Lordship, I spoke of you like a man who knew your worth. His first reply convinced me, that he has a particular esteem for your person. But this esteem is the very thing that has thwarted my application. A disciple and friend of the late M. *de Sens*, my Lord gives his approbation in appearance only to the proceedings of the Parliaments against the heretofore Jesuits. How skilful soever he may be in dissembling, he discovers, from time to time, that he is linked to his old friends by strong chains. When I insisted, to engage his consent, on the Dean's resignation in your favour, he assumed a cloudy look expressive of his dissatisfaction; and said, that “ you despair of your Republic
“ too soon; that he would not be the first
“ Bishop in *France* who enlisted the deserters;
“ that, in short, a person of your capacity
“ and reputation might find in his firmness
“ more

“ more considerable resources than a country
“ living.”

“ AT dinner, you, Sir, were the subject. Indeed, you have more friends than you imagine. His Lordship was congratulated on the acquisition which his diocese would have; all with one voice joined in the compliment. I observed my Lord; he was uneasy. At length, he broke silence:

“ I LOVED the Jesuits, *said he*, because I
“ have found them zealous friends. I have
“ voluntarily employed them in my diocese,
“ because, in the words of St. *Paul*, they *can*
“ *be all things to all men*. None, like them,
“ can adjust the shoe to every foot; they are
“ acceptable every where. But this evange-
“ lical monkery pleases me only as an act of
“ charity; and I should have been very sorry
“ if I had granted them for a year the powers
“ which I have often given them with plea-
“ sure for six weeks. Their missionaries in
“ town and country are so many walking
“ quacks, who comfort all their patients by
“ only administering to them potions agree-
“ able to the taste. No one is cured; and
“ after the departure of these * spiritual moun-
“ tebanks, my clergy have occasion for all

[* The same appellation was given, with at least equal propriety, to Orator *Henley* by Bishop *Sherlock*.]
“ their

“their severity to restore the regimen, and
“recover the credit, of good pharmacy.
“Notwithstanding the fine stories that are
“told by the authors of the *Lettres edifiantes*,
“I do not think their foreign missionaries
“better than the Provincial Apostles. M. le
“*Franc* is an able man, too able perhaps for
“the employment which he solicits. My
“Clergy, I doubt, would not be pleased with
“him. For my own part, I know I should
“not.”

“THIS harangue was delivered with a voice
and look that struck your friends dumb. We
made a quick transition to other subjects. I
am, nevertheless, of opinion, that you should
not despair of softening the Prelate. He loves
to be treated like a Father of the Church;
and he will be pleased to see, that you have
so high an idea of his abilities, as to plead
your cause before him. Be not sparing, Sir,
of good and solid arguments. Only be always
careful to close with submitting your doctrine
to his; and with protesting that the same
principle of obedience, which made you con-
form to the will of your superiors in your em-
ployments in *Asia* and *America*, will govern
your conduct, when you shall labour under
his orders in his diocese. Remind him of what
is good in the institute of St. *Ignatius*. Draw
up your defence of the law which the chiefs
have

have imposed on themselves to conceal from individuals its faulty parts. In short, make use of all your eloquence to anticipate objections. I am sure, you will receive the advice, which I have the presumption to give you, with the same spirit of friendship which suggests it. I wish to see you contented; and if my wishes are not gratified, the same affection, which would have made me partaker of your satisfaction, will give me a share in your disappointment, &c."

ACCORDING to the Chaplain's advice, M. *le Franc* will write to the Bishop; and I insure your Lordship a copy of his letter, the sketch of which seems to promise something to satisfy your curiosity. The Marquess having mentioned to me one, which he received at the beginning of his connection with the good Jesuit, I begged to have a sight of it; and I have here inclosed the copy. Be not apprehensive, my Lord, of being too indulgent to me. I may be a great sinner, but I am capable of a most hearty repentance, and if I have offended your Lordship, you are at liberty to fix the reparation. I am, &c.

"LET-

" L E T T E R.

" FROM FATHER LE *FRANC*, AN EX-
JESUIT, TO THE MARQUESS OF N.

" SIR,

" **Y**OU are very generous in doing honour to the genius of our age by the benevolence with which you honour me. Whatever may be the influence of that sweetness of manners which is so highly extolled, you, Sir, have a right to be proud of the equity which has induced you strenuously to protect the unhappy. I have already lived long enough since the suppression, to be sensible that I am indebted to persons who condescend to afford me their compassion. If I sometimes consider myself as an accomplice escaped from a band of conspirators, whom the general hatred pursues; if, thoroughly ashamed of having been, without knowing it, an instrument of the ambition of the chiefs, I am contented to pass for an idiot, and to be absolved for that reason; imagine, Sir, how much I think myself obliged to those who entertain a more favourable opinion of me, to those who deign to allow for the force of education,

cation, and the prejudices which it instills, to those who are ready to admit, that, with some understanding, and great integrity, good only may be discerned, in a mixture of good and evil, by such as are convinced, from the study of their own hearts, that the more truly pious and honest men are, the less do they consent to a composition concerning that which they have been accustomed to esteem one of their first duties.

“ I FIND this, Sir, by fatal experience. The cry of the nation against the Knights-Templars was neither so strong, nor so general, as it is now against the Jesuits. But I cannot do honour to the spirit of our age on the different treatment which has been given to the two Societies; and you will easily allow, that this difference is owing to the rank of the adversaries of the one and the other. The Templars had provoked Princes and the Great, whose wrath is a devouring fire, whose vengeance knows no limits, whose hearts once ulcerated are filled with incurable wounds. The ruin of that extravagant Ecclesiastical Militia had been made by King *Philip* a point of honour. That Monarch and the Sovereign Pontiff had agreed that the destruction of the Order should be effected by force. When they had set their hands to the work, it was necessary to complete

plete it.† The irregularity of the proceedings is at present universally allowed. But those who are accountable only to God may despise forms. The Pope's consent kept the people in a respectful or stupid silence on the heinousness of the imputations, the horror of the punishments, and the protestations of the punished. The people were only spectators.

“THE Jesuits, on the contrary, in possession of the favour of Princes and the Great, heard on a sudden the voice of the people raised against them. The people are as easily pacified as provoked; and the

[† The Order of Knights-Templars being accused by two of its Members of many horrible crimes, which were also confessed by others, was suppressed by Pope Clement V in the Council of *Vienne*, A.D. 1312, at the desire of *Philip IV*, or, *The Fair*, after numbers of the Knights had been put to death at *Paris*, protesting their innocence to the last. And five years after, the Grand-Master and chief Officers, revoking their former confession, for which they had been doomed to perpetual imprisonment, were burned, and the rest of the Knights of the Order dispersed. Their estates were given to the Knights of *Rhodes*, now of *Malta*. The Order was every where suppressed in *England* by authority of Parliament, but upon general suggestions, and the Knights were confined to certain convents, with handsome allowances. In the *Spanish* kingdoms, they suffered no injury in their persons, but only the loss of their estates. On the whole, it has been doubted whether the greatest crime of these Knights was not their wealth and their possessions.]

object

object of their wrath is no sooner given up to their vengeance, than he becomes the object of their pity. The Parliaments having judged the extinction of the Jesuits necessary, those great assemblies, to make a durable work, should have proceeded in it with as much seeming mildness and circumspection as firmness. They ought to have shewn themselves exempt from passion, in order to have always the voice of justice to oppose to that of pity. When they treated the body with rigour, which they artfully introduce as a foreigner, they should have appeared indulgent to the members who are natives, of whom, sooner or later, the general commiseration would have undertaken the defence. Instead of enormous crimes, of which the suspicion alone would have been sufficient to make the Order of Templars detested, the Parliaments have only laid to the charge of the Jesuits some bold or rash opinions, some erroneous principles of morality and doctrine, a form of religious discipline, of which they are now pleased to refuse the toleration, lastly, some speculations, * which, though justly branded by those Sovereign

* Can this *M. le Franc* be sincere in seeming to be ignorant of the many outrages which are specified in the different reports of the King's Counsel?

Courts, have all been constantly approved and authorised by the Court of *Rome*, deemed admissible and probable by most of the schools of Catholic *Europe*, sometimes disputed and attacked by the Universities in ill-humour, but tolerated for more than two centuries, in the Kingdom. These were no sufficient motives for sentence of death, by the rope, the sword, or the fire, to be passed on the Chiefs and the Members of the Society of *JESUS*.

“ PERHAPS in the first transports of hatred with which they were inspired, the people would have applauded a general proscription of the body and the members. But those of the proscribed, who, by flight would have escaped in great numbers from the hand of the executioner, would have found an asylum abroad. There they would have entered an appeal to people better informed and less provoked. They would have alledged the sincerity which the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff implied. They would have made the best of the security which that approbation gives to the most daring Divines.

“ WHO will engage that a time will never come, * in which the Clergy of *France* will not

* *Simia semper Simia*. The Ex-Jesuit maliciously refers to the accommodation of *Lewis XIV* with *Innocent XII* in 1693.” “ Every one of the new Bishops to whom the

be obliged by irresistible reasons of state to sacrifice to some politic and resolute Pope some of their liberties and determinations? Like the *Jews* transported into *Persia* and *Media*, the *French* Jesuits, dispersed in different asylums of *Germany*, *Italy* and *Poland*, would be supported by the hope and expectation of their re-establishment. The vacancy which their expulsion would make in the Apostolical Militia of *France* would be the more sensibly felt, as, like those protected by the edict of *Nantes*, they would labour abroad so as to make themselves regretted in their own country. Their complaints would move the people with pity for their fate. Their old friends would thereby be emboldened to stand forth. Intrigue and cabal would have something to authorise them to espouse the cause. They would penetrate to the Court, they would make their way into the Parliaments. This was seen in the reign of *Henry IV* †. An ar-

“ Pope sent Bull, says the *Président* Henault, wrote him
 “ a letter of submission, to shew him their concern for
 “ what had passed. They continued however in *France*
 “ to follow the maxims contained in the declaration of
 “ the Clergy of 1682.”

† Another malicious turn of the Jesuit. He alludes to the banishment pronounced by the Parliament of *Paris* in 1594, and rejected by those of *Toulouse* and *Bordeaux*, then revoked by an edict of the King, and by an arrêt of the Parliament of *Paris* itself.

ret of Parliament is not an irrevocable arrêt of the Fates. From being agents against the Jesuits, the people would become solicitors in their cause; and the Court annulling the proceeding of the Parliaments, those respectable bodies would be reduced to the necessity of making the purity of their intentions be admitted as an excuse for their rigour.

“AT the beginning of the last century, *Venice** pronounced that extinction of the Company and the banishment of all the Companions of Jesus. What was the consequence? The severity of the sentence became in the hands of powerful mediators a reason for desiring and obtaining its repeal.

“WE are treated gently, Sir, or at least the people may think so. But I would boldly say in full Parliament, that we owe no thanks for it to our judges: the personal regard which they have observed is a refinement of policy to make the Society of Jesus abandon all hopes of reinstating itself in *France*; it was proper to make the individuals, who composed it, unconcerned as to its existence; it was necessary to disable them from acting or speaking in its behalf, without incurring the danger

* They were banished as a punishment for their submission to the interdict laid by the Pope on all the *Venetian State*. They were restored, at the intercession of *Henry IV*, but under very burthenome restrictions.

of being thought to possess the spirit of the body. The rallying a dispersed troop is no great difficulty to an able chief, while to raise again that which has been disbanded and incorporated, a second creation is requisite. Those of us, if such there be, whom that spirit of the body has entirely depraved, may wish that we had been treated like the Templars. Death is neither more dreadful nor more painful in *France*, than in *Japan* and *China*, where so many Jesuits have chearfully undergone it.

“ IN the state to which the enacting part of the great arrêt reduces us, we shall soon be objects of total indifference to the people. Blended with the crowd of Ecclesiastics whose habit we have taken, we shall disappear from their eyes; and some ridiculous nick-name will be all that will remind them that there have been Jesuits in the Kingdom.

“ CERTAINLY, all this combination was formed by the Magistrates who prevented the apostolical functions being interdicted to us, after our reform. An alimony, such as has been granted us, if it was settled on solid security, may be fully sufficient for a young man capable of bending under a new yoke. It may well be sufficient also for those vegetating beings in a human form who make happiness consist in having nothing to do. The former
will

will procure his pension and his person to be received into one of the religious communities whose obscure inutility the Parliaments respect. and there he will grow old without disquiet, The others, peaceably enjoying their independence and sloth, will secure to themselves an animal life, for the rest of their days, with the citizen or the rustic. But a man of near sixty years of age, employed for more than thirty in the most painful functions of the apostleship, a man to whom study and labour are become wants, and who adds to most of the wants of this kind of life the profoundest ignorance of domestic œconomy, has not this man much cause to lament, with his pension of 400 livres, no less uncertain as to its continuance, than as to the regularity of its payment? Would it not be very grievous to me, that being, in spite of myself, again my own master, I should not be at liberty to avail myself of my studies and my genius, to support me in my old age, and to keep me from indigence, without being chargeable to a family by which I deserve to be forgotten, to whose assistance I have no longer any right, as, by the help of religion and the laws, I deprived it of its fortune, and fled from its service at an age when I might have been useful to it?

"I KNOW, Sir, that, besides our pension, the recompence, which is politely called the fee, for masses, and which is in reality a payment for them, is placed to our account. But I have on this article † a way of thinking, which the most dreadful poverty will never make me relinquish. I will never sell, at a civil rate, a Sacrifice which is invaluable. I have been accustomed to think, that the service of the altar, always honourable, always meritorious, ought to be gratuitous, if it be not toilsome; and that if a price be set upon the Sacred Ministry, it should be fixed, like other professions, in proportion to its labour. The ox should be nourished with the fruits of the earth which he tills; and the labourer should subsist on the profit of the sweat of his brows. I do not condemn the practice that is established in the dioceses of *France*, of taxing the masses * more or less according to the price

† It must be said, to the honour of the Jesuits, that in their houses they did not carry on the trade of the vestry. They always said their masses *gratis* for their friends and their clients. This made Father de Sacy, Attorney-General of the Society in *France*, so liberal of that consolation to poor *Lyon* and *Marseilles*, as mentioned in the letters quoted in the Process.

* The masses are at 15 and 20 sols at *Paris*. They are 12 at *Orleans*, 8 at *Besançon*, 5 in *Burgundy* and *Provence*. They are paid 25 sols at *Vienna*, *Prague*, and *Munich*.

of the most necessary provisions in the district†: I will not say, that it is shameful and unjust that a prayer of half an hour should pass for the labour of a day, and be charged as such. But I am of opinion, that the ordonnances of our Lords the Bishops on that subject are of the same nature as certain privileges of discipline in the old law, granted to the *Jews*, by the Lawgiver, with regret, and in mere condescension to their weakness; *because of the hardness of their hearts*, says the Gospel. I think that I am allowed to listen only to my conscience and my understanding, as to the refusal, or acceptance, of the favour. I have found, I apprehend, in *St. Paul* the principle on which I solicit an employment in the Sacred Ministry. *If a man desire the office of a*

† [Similar to this is the wise and provident regulation established in our *English* Universities by an Act of the 18 *Eliz.* ch. vi. which restrains "all Colleges (*Eton* "and *Worcester* included) from granting leases of "tythes, or of land, without reserving a third part at least to be paid in corn; that is to say, in good wheat "for 6s. 8d. the quarter, or under, and good-malt for 5s. "the quarter, or under; and for default thereof, the "tenants are to pay in ready money after the rate that "the best wheat and malt are sold for in the market immediately before the rent-day;" by virtue of which statute, planned by *Sir Thomas Smith*, Secretary of State, notwithstanding the decrease of the value of money, a considerable part of their revenues is preserved to those Societies.]

Bishop, says that Apostle, *he desireth a good work.*

“HE certainly does not mean a Bishoprick. He therefore maintains, that it is good and honourable to seek the labour which entitles us to the acknowledgments of the faithful.

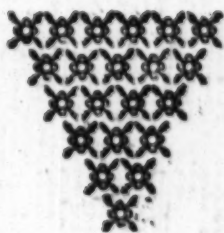
“I CANNOT express to you, Sir, how much I am obliged to you for the readiness with which you have procured the resignation which the Dean of *N.* so generously offers to make in my favour. I will immediately go and present myself before Mr. Attorney-General, and offer him proper security as to the oath which I have already taken to observe the terms of the arrêt. I was a *Frenchman* before I was a Jesuit; and not having ceased to be a Christian by becoming a Jesuit, I have no reluctance to contract, from the hands of the superiors which the laws of my country have given me, such engagements as I find conformable to the laws of God. I should never have entered into the Society of Jesus, if the same authority which at present condemns its institute had not testified its excellence by the grant of many prerogatives denied to other religious communities.

“I MAKE no doubt, that I have some obstacles to encounter in the Court of *Rome.*
But

But by good arguments, and a little patience, I flatter myself, I shall surmount them. The General of the Jesuits most probably will not imitate those ancient *Italian* Captains (*Condottieri*†) who rather chose to see their soldiers become vagabonds and sluggards than labourers and citizens. His Reverence has no longer any reason to doubt that the Company of Jesus is for ever suppressed in the Kingdom.

I am, &c.

[† Generals who sell their troops]



L E T T E R XIII.

TO MR. JAMES N. MERCHANT IN
LONDON.

How apt we are to magnify distant objects. Critical observations on the Office of Commerce established in France. Particular proofs that that Office is more prejudicial than usefull. That it discourages genius and invention in the arts. That it might be better composed. Instance of its bad influence. That the English are more assisted in their commerce by the Parliament. Digression on the different branches of great commerce in France. That in them all, there is a convulsive weakness cherished with great pomp.

S I R,

CONTRARY to the eye, the mind magnifies objects at a distance. An axiom of the antients well known to you is, *Major à longinquo reverentia*. You have little idea of the care and attention of the *British* Government to commerce, because you see it near, and are within reach of discovering even the least defects. You have a much more advantageous opinion of *France* in that respect, because you only consider her practice, which
you,

you view at a distance, in the gross, because you value her regulations by reading them. The *French* are in the same manner mistaken with regard to us. I am very far from ranking you among those envious politicians, who, imagining that the welfare of our neighbours is so much stolen from ours, exclaim at and lament their industry and wealth. You, I believe, are so much the friend of mankind, as to wish that they all were happy; and I am persuaded, that if the comparison which you make of *England* with *France*, sours your temper, your discontent arises less from the advantages over us which you ascribe to the *French*, than from the indolence in which you suppose us to languish with regard to our own.

LET not those splendid titles of the Office, the Chamber, the Deputies, the Council of *Commerce*, and that heap of ordonnances of the Kings of *France* on the minutest particulars relating to it, my good friend, impose upon you. It is the work of a hundred subalterns, who have the madness to set up for persons of consequence, and whom some ministers, ambitious of the reputation of acute and laborious men, have allowed to treat gravely of trifles. We have something much better than all those establishments, because we have nothing of that-kind; and as long as
our

our dear country shall preserve the constitution which she has successively inherited since the reign of *Elizabeth*, she will have no reason to envy other commercial States, unless perhaps it be for their moderation.

THE Office of Commerce in *France* is an establishment of the reign of *Henry IV.* You know how inconsiderable that department then was. The most necessary manufactures were then in their infancy; and the Duke of *Sully*, Minister of the Finances, opposed in Council the establishment and encouragement of others. That Statesman, much more solid than brilliant, was of opinion, that the resource of industry in the arts ought to be left to small States, and that such a kingdom as *France* should derive, from the goodness of her soil, and from the culture of her lands, that real power and independent wealth, which are suitable to her: Observe, that the Kingdom was then one third less extensive, and more † populous, than at present.

† This third must doubtless be understood as to proportion. A country of 300 leagues, which reckons 17 or 18 millions of inhabitants, is really greater, and less populous by one third, than that of 200, which extends the number of its inhabitants to 19 millions; and such is the state of *France* under *Louis XV.* Such it was under *Charles IX.*

THE Office of Commerce, over which *Sully* presided under the King his master, was intended less to improve than to regulate that entirely new department. It was so neglected in the following reign [*Lewis XIII's*] that the remembrance of it was lost. However, in those times, when the Government was taxed with a shameful negligence as to that source of wealth, the *French* made their principal settlements in *America*. So true it is, that liberty in this particular avails more than order. *Lewis XIV* re-established the Office, which was one of those which *M. Colbert* had under his direction. That Minister appointed some conferences, to which he invited those Statesmen who had most reputation. But there was not one of them who had made the subject his peculiar study. It must, however, be allowed, that the operations of *Colbert* are proofs of knowledge and capacity. Most of the regulations tend to encourage the manufacturer and merchant, to animate their industry, to give credit to their labour and correspondence, to establish the reputation of their integrity, within and without the Kingdom. This is the face of the medal: now behold the reverse of it.

THE two characters of which *Colbert* was composed seem to have suggested between them
all

all this polity. Before he entered into the service of Cardinal *Mazarin* as an Intendant or a man of business, this *French* Minister was a trader. He had no experience but in matters of trade, in manufacturing and selling by retail, he saw commerce at large only in confusion; hence so many niceties in the statutes of the corporation of arts and trades, trifles severely enjoined, which only put a constraint on all those bodies, and excite them to perpetual war or jealousy. The Financer is equally distinguishable in the edicts, notwithstanding the rhetoric of their preambles. We discover in the immense detail of regulations, the Minister ingenious in contriving trespasses lucrative to his Majesty, industrious in devising subjects for imposts and taxes; in short, the King's man rather than the nation's man, zealous for the order, and indifferent or blind as to the freedom, of commerce. He has separated industry and commerce as lands are separated. Grants and exclusive privileges have enslaved talents and emulation. The dependence, in which the Office has kept individuals, has suffered only a very few to take wing by themselves. *France* has had a multitude of moderate traders. But she cannot produce four of them who have soared to any great height, unless the service and favour of the Court

Court have given them courage and funds for the attempt, and leave to enrich themselves with impunity. † *Samuel Bernard*, the most renowned in the last generation, was thrice a bankrupt. He once procured the rise of specie at the moment when he was to make some large payments; and the specie reverted to its value when he expected his returns: this was in the time of the Duke-Regent.

OBSERVE, my friend, that the man of genius, who invents, improves, and in part brings to perfection some arts and trades, is obliged to submit his discovery to the examination of the Office, and to canvass for the suffrage of its chiefs before he can think of making it of value. Conceive the objections and tricks which jealousy, prejudice, and ignorance, the patronesses of old customs, the enemies of innovations, never fail to excite against him: then value the encouragements, which, you are told, the *French* Government gives to commerce. Particular instances would carry me too far. Let me ask you, whether an *Englishman*, who should invent a machine, by means of which he could perform, at a small expence, or with few hands, the work which costs other manufac-

† [A celebrated banker at *Paris*.]

turers a large consumption of men and money, would scruple readily to make such an advantage of his invention as he pleases? Let me ask you, whether he who should discover a better manner of spinning, fulling, dying, than those which are now in use, ought to account for the profit of his manufacture to any but himself? You will reply, that "otherwise there would be endless vexation, "talents and genius would be discouraged, "stifled." Well, Sir, practice and law say the contrary in *France*. The man who should discover something better than the *Gobelins* in tapestry, would have to struggle with the patrons and all who are interested in that famous manufacture, in order to obtain leave to work it. It is so with all the rest. M. de **Vaucanson*, an able mechanic, has made a machine, in form of a loom wound up, by means of which, one man may perform, in silks well wrought, the work of fourteen. In *England*, the Parliament would have rewarded the inventor, and recommended the invention. Here, the Office has pronounced, that such a machine would reduce to beggary, for a considerable time, the weavers of *Lyons*, and other workmen of that class†;

* [This ingenious artist exhibited some very curious automats a few years ago in *London*.]

† [For the same *wise* reason, the *Turks* have hitherto prohibited

and it has been rejected. They might as well have prohibited wind and water mills, because they did the work of a number of men who were maintained by the laborious trade of grinding by hand, and who must be in distress till they had found other means of gaining a subsistence †. The same Artist has given the idea of a machine, since brought to much perfection, for raising sand, clay, mud, gravel, from the bottom of the water, and for cleaning at a small expence, the beds of rivers. The machine is now on the point of boring into rocks, and of being able to dig any where under water with as

prohibited the art of printing, lest it should reduce to beggary the great number of scribes, &c. who subsist by transcribing and copying books. And as wisely might the Parliament of *England*, at the intreaty of the watermen, ferrymen, &c. have refused to allow any bridges to be built over the *Thames*.]

† [These grinders, when mills were first invented, no doubt, complained and clamoured, but they soon found other employments. We wonder not at the sawyers destroying, a few years ago, Mr. *Dingley's* saw-mill at *Limehouse*; but at the same time, we applaud the Government for repairing the loss, and punishing the offenders. And strange it is, that such a wise and philosophical nation as *France* should in these instances be so impolitic and narrow-minded. Many craftsmen of *Ephesus*, &c. were ruined, for a time, when Paganism was abolished; but that was no good reason, with the rest of the world, for rejecting Christianity.]

little

little trouble as expence. *France* has many great rivers which occasion most destructive inundations, because their channel in some places is not deep enough, such is the *Loire*. She has many others, which might be navigated by the largest vessels for fifty or sixty leagues to the inland part of the Kingdom, if some banks of sand and gravel, some beds of stone, did not reduce them to seven feet of water for the space of a few † toises. Do you suppose, that this machine, offered to the Office of Commerce, has been received by it? If you do, you are mistaken. Many arguments were used, and it was determined that things must be left as they were †. One of the proprietors of this machine is gone into a foreign country, where they know better to what uses it may be applied. If we had been still masters of *Normandy*, we should not have hesitated to set the inventors at work in the *Seine*; and in a few years we should have rendered *Rouen* a rival city to *London*.

† [A toise is a measure of six feet.]

‡ [Happy it is for Mr. *Brindley* and his employers, that such principles do not prevail in *England*. If they did, stage-coachmen and carriers, his constant antagonists, would certainly prevent him from cutting canals. But even in *France*, the Government, in *Louis XIV's* time, must have had more enlarged views. Else how could the canal of *Languedoc*, the glory of his reign, have been formed']

This idea could not escape the gentlemen of the Office, as it is publicly known that the *Dutch* once offered to undertake that work at their own hazard and expence, without any reimbursement but the privileges which they demanded for their commerce. We shall, one day or other, adopt that machine of *Vaucanson* for silks, if we have not already, and the saving which it will occasion in workmanship to our manufacturers of *Spitalfields*, will enable them to lower the price of their wares, and to supplant in that branch the manufacturers of *Lyons*.

PERHAPS you will not admit, as to the general commerce of a great nation, the influence which I impute to that embargo on individuals. I allow, that you may think it just to prefer the welfare of the community to that of one or more citizens. I agree, that you are in the right to take my observation in this point of view, which certainly is not the true one. You will then tell me, with enthusiasm, of the Deputies which every great commercial City of the Kingdom keeps at *Paris*, where they take care of the interest of their constituents at the Office. You would be less mistaken, if these Deputies, who are commercial people, had a deliberative voice in the assembly. But they are confined to the voice of representation; and the members

bers of the Office are by no means men of that profession. The Council, or Office, of Commerce is composed of men of the robe and finance, who have, and can only have, a distant speculative knowledge of internal and external commerce. As I am of a good disposition, I will not suspect, that they are biased by private interest, and that frequently a man who solicits a privilege for an undertaking of great and lucrative prospects, cannot obtain it but by distributing some Actions, or *Sous*, in the affair, at the pleasure of some of the Gentlemen-Counsellors. But I will affirm, that being utterly incapable of seeing and judging for themselves, they are determined by the practitioners whom they consult, who are not always the most able nor the most disinterested. I will say, that in great as well as in less affairs, they suffer themselves to be retarded by the weakest objections, and often lose sight of the object, while they are considering it. Twenty or thirty years ago, *Abbeville* might have been a maritime town, and the Province of *Picardy* would have been twice as valuable, if there had not been an Office of Commerce, whose consent was necessary to a Company which offered to make the *Somme* navigable for ships of three hundred tons. Those zealous and industrious patriots had the misfortune to be opposed by M.

Chauvelin,

Chauvelin, then Intendant. When the Gentlemen of the Office had approved the undertaking, and expressed their agreement to the terms proposed by the undertakers, the Intendant demanded a preference in the grant in favour of the citizens of *Abbeville*. It was debated; the project was pursued no farther. I could give you a hundred instances of the like kind.

OUR Cities have no Deputies of Commerce at *London*. We have not even such an Office. But every considerable Corporation in *England* has its Representative in Parliament, where its least grievance becomes a national grievance, where its request is supported by the whole nation, where its agent is equally admitted to a voice both in debates and resolutions, where no one has a right to suppress either its petitions or its complaints.

SURVEY the last and the present reign; you will find that the Commerce of *France* has sunk, and been neglected, in proportion as the Office has had a greater influence over it. You will see nothing more real in the regulations than the subjection of the manufactures and manufacturers, of the merchants and merchandises, to new duties and new forms, the certain infraction of which promises confiscations and penalties. Let us proceed to cases in point.

THE

THE *French* carried on, for fifteen or twenty years, the most flourishing commerce in *India*. Was it ever so useful or solid as ours? No; the Office made it sometimes the concern of the King, sometimes the concern of a Company, and never the concern of the Nation. You see these Gentlemen rank the cargoes of their ships in the number of contraband goods, and with difficulty grant them the *Permit*. What a singular idea, to be reduced to carry with profit into foreign countries manufactures which are prohibited at home! You see them, some years after, change their principles, prohibit, or, which amounts to the same thing, load with imposts the coffee of their *American* colonies, in order to give the advantage to that which the *India* Company imports from its little isle of *Bourbon*. The discontent of the *American* colonists proves that the commerce of the *West Indies* has been no better conducted than that of the *East*. A greedy Company, served by still more greedy Clerks, disgusted the *Canadians* against trafficking with the Savages, and the Savages themselves against bartering with the *French*. The Office of Commerce, without interfering by the least remonstrance, suffered the excellent plantations of tobacco in the *Great* and *Little Antilles* to be ruined; it has not had the idea of establishing any in *Louisiana*, which perhaps

is the best soil for this plant in all *America*. The fine moiety of *Hispaniola*, possessed by the *French* for a hundred years past, is not cultivated in the inland parts. *Guiana*, an immense continent between *Mexico* and *Brasil*, divided by the great river of the *Amazons*, is not yet settled. The Ministry seem now to have some views on this colony. But I dare prophecy, that it will be a transient blaze, and that the *French* vivacity will soon yield to the first difficulties. What difficulties, however, in comparison of those which the *Dutch* have so advantageously surmounted at *Surinam* and *Perbice*! Every thing for eighty years past has assured the *French* that the soil of *Guiana* is as good as that of the *Spanish* and *Portuguese* settlements. They know that the inland part of the country is inhabited by some *Indians*, gentle, and adorned with necklaces of emeralds and other precious stones. Nevertheless they have not penetrated twenty leagues into the country; they are confined to the peninsula of *Cayenne*, which is only seventeen leagues in circumference, the grants of some small Companies, no sooner formed than disgusted and ruined by this possession. The contract of the + *Assiento* came to the *French* the year after *Lewis XIV* had put the

† See p. 145.

Office of Commerce on the most respectable footing; and this traffic, so lucrative to the *English* Company has ruined the *French* undertakers. Sole possessors of the coast of *Africa* as far as *Fort de la Mina*, for a long course of years, the *French* confined themselves, for fifty or sixty years past, to the small neck of land between the *Senegal* and the *Gambia*; which they also shared with us. They would have freed themselves from much embarrassment, and been their own masters, if they had penetrated far into the inner part of that rich country. There were some laborious and intelligent men who gave the most proper instructions to encourage the Companies to undertake it. Yet we found things even in a worse state than they were at the beginning of this century, when they were not on a good footing; and notwithstanding the indication of the gold mines of *Galem* and *Falémé* given by the Director *Brue* of *Rouen*, forty years ago, the *French* Company still carried on the traffic of negroes and gums along the *Senegal*. What will become of you, my good friend, with your prejudice for the Council, of Office, of Commerce, when you shall see, a few years hence, our *African* Company, which has not the assistance of such a light, unload at the *Tower* some good ingots of *Galem*, intermixed with elephants

elephants teeth and gums? Rightly considered, Sir, it is the only real fruit of our conquests, if we keep very nearly what we have taken; for the *French* Office of Commerce had given us the useful domain of the countries whose sovereignty we have acquired by arms. The successors of the able *Dupleix* had suffered us to take the pre-eminence in the *East-Indies*. The Savages, dissatisfied with the sordid and base impositions of the *Canada* Company, gave our markets the preference to those of *Montreäl*, where there was nothing but brandy to attract them. Except twelve or fifteen hundred negroes, we had the whole traffic on the coast of *Africa*. Judge of its abundance, by recollecting, that, in 1757, M. *de Ker-saint* took from us there thirteen hundred of them without our colonies suffering by it. Obligated to submit to the Farmers-General of tobacco, the Office has deprived *France* of the advantage of being supplied, by herself and her colonies, with that valuable commodity. The poor people among her colonists, who subsisted by the culture of that plant, have thereby been forced to desert. The *Antilles* have lost their natural defenders. Our settlements have gained the men and the branch of this commerce. After this, of what importance to us is our possessing the land?

I GIVE you leave, my good friend, to admire the spirit of order, which, you think, you see in *France* more than in *England*, as to commerce. But observe with me, that subordination is not made for merchants, and that to them too much order is the height of disorder.

I am, &c.



LETTER XIV.

TO SIR ARTHUR P. JUSTICE OF PEACE IN
DEVONSHIRE.

The French Jurisprudence is a chaos; and there are good reasons for leaving it in that state. Inveſſive againſt thoſe who exclaim, One King, one Law. Excellence of the French police in criminal cauſes. Why the French, when attacked, reſiſt the robber. That this courageous imprudence is of ſervice to the Public. Why there are more wicked and blood-thirſty robbers in France than in England. Representation of the terrible puniſhment of the wheel, unknown to the Engliſh. Why a Frenchman ſeldom carries to execution the impudent fierceneſs of a profligate. Inſufficiency of the penal laws in England. Their exceſs in France. More uſeful manner of puniſhing public offences. Elogium and duty of the Maré-chauffée. Admirable office of the King's Attorney for the welfare of Society. Obſervations on the law of ambuſcade. Of what importance gravity is in the dreſs of Magiſtrates. Advantage of the grand Tribunals of France in that particular. How the Parliaments are compoſed: how reſpectable thoſe Tribunals are. Uſe of popular prejudice as to Dæmoniſm in Courts of Juſtice.

SIR,

THE genius and temper of nations have guided Legislators. Conquerors themselves have conformed to them, when they would reign over the vanquished. I know not, in history, any but our first *William*, who succeeded in changing the laws of the nation which he forced to change its master. Con- versant, as you are, in the history of your country, you do not expect reflections on the part which you have most studied. I should entertain you more agreeably on the *French* Jurisprudence: one thing only stops me; my errant ignorance. Do not look upon me with pity. Of the learned in *France* there are few who are really learned in that respect; and the Counsel who is distinguished at *Paris* for his opinion and his pleading, would be obliged to have his Counsel and his Attorney, if he had a cause within the jurisdiction of most of the other Parliaments. Modern wits have done their utmost to ridicule that variety of laws more diversified in the Provinces of the Kingdom than the productions of their soil. But these are the reasonings of men of wit, which are no reasons with men of sense. Those Provinces which were united to the Crown by capitulation, stipulated for the pre-
servation

servation of their uses and customs, which constituted their laws. They have a right to require that they should be preserved to them. The rest obtained the same from the prudence of their Kings, to whom the form of the yoke was of little importance; provided it was firmly fixed and chearfully worn. The ablest Legislator can contrive none which in these respects is equal to that of habit. They complain, that this yoke is not the same for all the subjects of the same Monarch, like the uniform of all the men of the same regiment, the harness of all the horses of the same set. Fashion apart, let us consider what occasions their complaints. I hear the *Parisian* deride the *Norman* and his chicanery, and lament that he understands nothing of the action which has been entered against him at *Rouen*. Ignorance and self-interest bias his words and actions. Nothing seems good to him but what is done as at *Paris*; and he would transact his business in the country without losing sight of the steeple of his parish-church, without any assistance but that of his acquaintance the Counsellor, or Attorney, at the *Châtelet*. But is the *Norman* chagrined, does he think himself aggrieved by having his Custom for a Code, and by discussing his affairs on the footing on which they were left him by his ancestors? I think not. All those who cla-

mour for an unity in the Law, as well as in the King, if they were invited to co-operate in a general reform, would vote for placing in the new universal Code the Custom of their country, excepting the articles that are disadvantageous to them in the accidental situation in which they are. The elder brother of a *Parisian* family would cancel the law for an equal division of estates; the younger brother of *Normandy* would abolish birth-right; and so of the rest. Vanity and injustice are the motives of those who wish for one law for the whole Kingdom. They think that the law of their country should be preferred, they find that it would be more favourable to them. A strong propensity to censure, a desire of displaying wit and singularity, animate those declaimers who demand an universal Code, without being interested in it. What, in fact, is the prejudicial influence of the difference of Custom in the Provinces? "The law-suits there are longer and more expensive." That is not true. It costs neither more time, nor more money, to obtain the explanation of one written text than of another. The length and fees of suits are not a local fault: such is the nature of law-suits in all the countries where despotism is not established. Will it be said, that "this diversity of laws multiplies the Ministers of Justice, who are the blood-suckers."

"suckers of the people?" This is false and absurd. Every Custom is confined within its jurisdiction, for which there must be all kinds of Magistrates. Places in the Magistracy being venal, they increase in number, because the Court, from time to time, is in want of money, not that the good administration of justice requires it. The Parliaments of *France* have more than doubled the number of their principal Members and subaltern Officers, without the Customs of their jurisdiction having been altered. We must therefore allow a *Parisian* to think it ridiculous and unjust to lose at *Vernon* a cause which he would have gained at *Poissy*. We overlook his thinking it strange that a village of *France* borders on a village of *Spain*, *Germany*, or *Flanders*, and that *French* is not spoken within musket-shot of a *French*-town.

It will be less difficult for me to tell you something of the criminal police of the Kingdom of *France*. Its difference from ours is striking, and it is nearly uniform in the whole Monarchy. They would laugh here at a man, who, on setting out for his seat, or for the country, should put in a separate pocket some small parcels of five or six louis-d'ors for the robbers whom he is afraid of meeting on the road. A *Frenchman* defends his money as he would his life. I do not think, that this

proceeds from his attachment to his money; still less do I think, that it is owing to a principle of equity, and that he may not reward, by his forced liberality, a wicked action. I would rather suppose, that a warmth of blood excites the passion and courage of some, and that others are transported by the happy prejudice which makes them think it disgraceful to yield. Be that as it may, we reason better for our own private interest, which forbids us to expose our lives to preserve a sum which we may lose without any considerable inconvenience; and the *Frenchman* acts more beneficially for Society, which receives all the advantage of the danger which he braves. His custom of resisting the robber renders the profession more dangerous, and consequently less followed. Our good-nature emboldens the least courageous to make it their resource. A man void of principle, who has nothing to lose, takes to robbing on the road, because he finds himself possessed of a little assurance and swiftness of foot; he is determined to it still more readily, if he can furnish himself with a good horse. He knows, that he has no risks to run but on the side of Justice, from which he may flatter himself with escaping the more easily, as she does not take part against him till he has fallen into her hands. He knows, besides, that when he is there, he acquires a property

property in the fruit of his robberies by paying for them with his life; and he may love a wife, children, an accomplice, well enough to console himself for his death by the certainty of having made their circumstances easy. You know, that this was the case of the unworthy Gentleman who robbed the post-boy of N. on the highway a few years ago.

In *France*, nature, or fortune, has need, as one may say, of an effort, to make a highwayman. He must be a determined villain, a monster, who has attained, by means of his wicked disposition, or of his crimes, a contempt of his own life and that of others, a desperado, capable of supporting with frigid indifference the certainty of atoning, sooner or later, for his offences by the most dreadful punishments. You will allow, that men of this hideous sort are every where more rarely found than of those who set themselves above shame and remorse. The resistance and pursuit which these wretches expect, urge them to commit those cruel executions which are spared by ours. They seldom let those whom they plunder escape with life. Certain of being followed by the track, they destroy their traces as much as possible, and are as often murderers as robbers. Justice also is employed in tormenting them with punishments proportioned to their enormities, and in pursuing them with measures

tures directed by the difficulty and necessity of extirpating them from Society. While the pacific robber, commonly called a *thief*, that is, one who employs nothing but his industry in his larcenies, is only hanged and strangled, the highwayman is condemned to have his bones broken with eleven blows of an iron bar, which he receives on a cross of St. *Andrew*. After which, he is tied to a small wheel, raised horizontally on a post ten or twelve feet high. His head hangs down, and his face is turned towards the sky. There, he is abandoned to the horrors of the burning thirst which the fever gives him, and to the acute pains which his fractures occasion. After being left in this terrible agony for twenty-four hours, he generally receives the death's stroke, and his body is delivered to be buried. But in certain cases, he is taken from the wheel, and thrown, like a foot-ball, into the midst of an ardent fire, where he is burned alive.

THIS punishment, which imagination can scarce exceed, except in the duration, has been preceded by an imprisonment short enough, but very severe, in a dungeon, and by a double torture, ordinary and extraordinary, the preparations for which alone would terrify our most hardened villains; and, lastly, it is accompanied by every thing which religion affords most likely

likely to render the passage from life to death formidable. The fiercest criminal is harassed by so many sufferings; his spirit parts with some of its harshness, and abates of its untowardness. This is the reason that the malefactor in *France* seldom carries to execution the impudent firmness, of which ours sometimes make a parade.

THE goodness of your heart makes you endure with pain the hideous representation which I have just given you; and when you reflect, that it is not extraordinary in this country, you can scarce forbear accusing its magistrates of inhumanity. But recollect the principle of the Legislator, who ought to adapt his laws to the genius and temper of the people; and you will applaud the severity which happily avails itself of the terror of example, to preserve thousands of men from wickedness. God forbid that I should tax the *French* with more depravity than the rest of *Europe*! On the contrary, they are naturally gentle, humane, compassionate, generous. Of all *European* tempers this is the best composition for Society. But they have in their minds a vivacity, a levity, so prodigious, that they are the most ready to be influenced by example; and they require being guarded against this impetuosity by every thing that can urge them to reflection.

THE

THE *English* are quite different; and yet, if I should have the honour of a seat in Parliament, I shall one day propose to mitigate our penal laws†. The villain is less afraid of death than of its attendants. He who has the meanest capacity has sense enough to know, that, sooner or later, he must die; and he little regards the hastening that period, if he knows, that, by risking to hasten it, he does not risk the making that moment more painful to himself than it is likely to be made by nature. This is the opinion of Justice *Fielding*, who, though blind, is more enlightened than many of our illustrious men who have the use of both their eyes. He says, he has known, in the prison of *Newgate*, some criminals, sure of their approaching condemnation, give themselves up to good cheer, while expecting the day to go to *Tyburn*. He has heard them say, by way of consolation, that the ignominious halter would spare them the pains of the gout and stone, the languors of the consumption, the infirmities of age; and that all that was necessary was to have patience for one minute.

THE legislative authority in *France* seems to have missed this observation in providing for the

[† This was proposed, but without success, in the last session by Sir *William Meredith*.]

chastisement of crimes less atrocious, though not less contrary to the welfare of Society. It has lavished, as one may say, that kind of death, which in itself is no imposition, which avenges the wrong done to Society by giving it a fresh wound, which punishes the guilty without correcting him, which covers him with disgrace without making him serve as a warning. The labour of the Gallies is terrible, much more dreadful than death only, to most of those who undergo it. But it removes far off the disturber of the public peace, who, for the sake of that public peace, ought rather to be kept before the eyes of those who might be tempted to pursue the same course. The oar, in my opinion, should be the chastisement of the military deserter, who would be suitably punished, and in an exemplary manner, by an abject and forced service, for having fled from the honourable service which his country demanded of him. The neighbours of *France* might then settle a cartel with her for giving up those fugitives, whom it is contrary to their right of asylum to deliver up to death; and the idea of a life burthened with misery and infamy would restrain the fickleness which makes desertion a kind of national malady in the *French* soldiery. The vilest and most laborious public works would more exemplarily and more really chastise rogues of all kinds.

kinds and smugglers. I am not for transportation to *America* or *Asia*, except of those who criminally offend against morality and religion, of the guilty whose fault is extenuated, with regard to Society, by some circumstances which place it in the number of frailties and misfortunes rather than crimes.

THIRTY thousand of the lightest and best-armed Cavalry are the instruments of Justice to preserve order and correct disorder. They are distributed by divisions and brigades in the * Generalities of the Kingdom, under some Chiefs and Officers, who are, for the most part, old soldiers. They have good pay, and enjoy considerable immunities among the burghers, with whom they continue to form a body; which gives, in my opinion, this civil army a peculiar merit. It is called the † *Maréchaussée* of *France*, because those chief military Officers are its chief superiors: But all the divisions are under the command of the Tribunals of Justice, the Governors and Intendants of the Provinces. They constantly patrol the highways and the adjoining woods, they scour the country and the cross-roads; and they repair in a strong body to the places where the Officers have advice of disorders.

[* The precincts of the public Office of the Treasurers of *France*.]

[† From *Maréchal*.]

being committed. The Commandant in each Generality is styled Provost. He is both a Military Officer and a Magistrate. Being Judge of the criminals taken by his people in flagrant offences, he makes a very short process. The longest, as I am informed, does not exceed twenty-four hours. This expeditious sentence gave rise to the proverb, *Soon taken, soon hanged.*

THE establishment of a *Maréchaussée*, or Constabulary, of this kind, is wanting with us; and I do not see a better and safer destination of our national Militia, than the mounting a sixth part of them only on horseback, and making the whole serve by piquets.

IN default of a plaintiff in a notorious offence, the King's Attorney acts as informer and solicitor. He acts officially in the name and at the charge of the King, for those whom the expence of the process might deter from bringing an action. He interposes in their behalf, and supplies their place, as soon as he is requested; provided that it be only a criminal cause. If he suspects, that the Judges in the first instance have been too indulgent or too severe, he lodges an appeal to a superior tribunal, without consulting either the criminal or his clients; which makes Judges and Barristers, great and small, adhere to their duty from the little hopes of impunity that either of them have. You perceive, Sir, how
superior

superior this police is to ours, which has no assistance for the discovery and pursuit of criminals, but the resentment of the injured parties, and the allurement which is given to the vulgar by the conditional promise of a pecuniary reward. Excepting the tortures of the rack, on which I would use great reserve and the utmost circumspection, I do not hesitate to present *France* to you as a model in this important part of administration. Her law concerning † ambuscade, or premeditated assassination, seems shockingly rigorous to the *Germans*, who place the Nobleman at a vast distance from the Plebeian. It is no more than just in the eyes of an *Englishman*, to whom an honest Citizen is as good a man as a Peer of the realm. But it is amazing, that this law, which punishes, without remission, by the most dreadful torments, the man, who premeditatedly takes another at an advantage, should be extended to outrages which do not attack life, in a nation, where the man, who has some lace on his cloaths, threatens with impunity to give him, who has none, a hundred bastinadoes, and sometimes puts his threats in execution, without any consequence. An instance will make you comprehend me better.

† *Guet-appens.*

THE rich Jew *d'Uliz*, twenty or twenty-five years ago, sent his valet de chambre to *Paris* with a thousand louis-d'ors, and orders to give fifty blows with a cudgel to a fiddler at the opera who had shared with him the good graces of a singer. The trusty valet found two soldiers of the guards who promised him their service, and he contracted with them for this operation, and for that of breaking a bottle of *aqua-fortis* in the face of the lady. But instead of keeping their word with him, the two soldiers went and gave information to the threatened pair. The valet was seized, interrogated, convicted. The arrêt condemned him to be broken alive on the wheel at the † *Grève*, and passed the same sentence in effigy on the rich Jew, his employer and his master. A most dreadful example this, and very likely to insure the public tranquillity, and the personal safety of every citizen! A beau, in white silk stockings, his sword by his side, his cane in his hand, walks through one of the streets of *Paris*: he is splashed by a poor hackney-coachman, who cannot chuse the pavement for the feet of his horses as the fine gentleman chuses them for his. Immediately he runs after the coach, overtakes it, and severely canes the miserable coachman,

[† An open square, where most of the criminals are executed: The *Tyburn* of *Paris*.]

who

who has no defence. Either no notice is taken, or the Police acquits the gentleman for giving a crown to his accuser. A strange contrast this between the law and the example! Let us overlook it, like a † shade in a picture, or a stain in a beautiful silk.

THE *French* have also, in their superior Courts of Justice, a decency and a dignity beyond ours, which seem to me of the utmost consequence to make Justice and her Ministers respected. Nothing is more venerable and more striking than a Chamber of the *French* Parliament assembled; and this is owing to a long and uniform dress, consisting of a large scarlet or black gown, with a vast perriwig. The client and the culprit scarce know those of their Judges with whom they have been acquainted; and the Judges, one would think, by their manner, were, at that critical moment, equally unacquainted with them. Both have an idea that they are before men who have a peculiar prerogative equitably to dispose of their fortunes and their lives. The grave deportment of all effacing every idea of personal favour or malevolence, they are imagined to be endowed with extra-

[† This simile seems misapplied. A shade in a picture is no blemish, but generally a beauty, and therefore is not to be *overlooked*, like a stain in a silk, an inconsistency in government, &c.]

ordinary penetration to trace iniquity through all its windings.

SUCH, really, is the reputation of these grand Tribunals, which are called the Sovereign Courts, because they judge in the King's name in the last resort. There is in each of them a set of men, more or less, who, from father to son, have held the first places there, and who studying to discharge the important duties of their function with capacity, consider integrity, knowledge, and the love of labour, as a patrimony to transmit to their children, as their ancestors have transmitted it to them. These respectable men are, as one may say, the soul of the Parliament. Their opinion, and their example, determine the young Magistrates, and those who only seek in the Magistracy a civil office. A very small number of capital causes are mentioned with astonishment, in which appearances and the confessions extorted by the rack have led some of those august Assemblies into mistakes; and a multitude of others are recollected with pleasure, in which it seems as if a superior assistance had enabled them to penetrate some mysteries uncommonly obscure. It were to be wished, for the good of Society, that the pretended free-thinkers, confining their discoveries to themselves and their friends, had left in the minds of the people, and of all such

such classes of the Nobility as may be associated with them, the characteristic privilege of the Parliaments in the affair of Dæmonism. The notion was false, but it was credited and had its use, that the grand Tribunal of Justice is in such high esteem with the Supreme Being, that he subjects to it the Devil himself, whom he deprives of all power in behalf of his servants whose cause the Parliament tries. This, it is said, is absurd. You, Sir, will not think so, as it is useful. This prejudice, so ridiculous in the eyes of a Philosopher, who thinks only for himself, changes its appearance when viewed by one, who considers this community of fierce animals, made gentle towards each other by their wants, and still exasperated against each other by their passions. It adds a new sentiment of veneration to all those of fear, which renders them tractable to the only curb which can restrain them; it very properly introduces the marvellous into a defensive jurisdiction, the discovery of whose real weakness might be dreaded. This makes it valuable. In all ages, men have been governed by their prejudices; and those false, or true, Sages, who, without any mission but their vanity, diffuse the light of reason into minds which it serves only to dazzle and mislead, ought to be deemed the pests of Society.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V .

TO THE EARL OF B. ON THE FINANCES.

- §. I. *Visit to the Financer of Letter VI at his country-house. How Sir Robert proposes to give his Lordship an account of it. That good Financers are almost indifferent as to the change of system and administration. Convincing proofs of this. Who are truly responsible: what is the Tribunal before which they should be brought. Mistake of the Parliaments in that respect. Hypothesis of the establishment of a Chamber of Justice. How formidable it would be to most of the Financers. Magnificent idea of the rank which the richest men of that order hold in the nation. Just estimation of their opulence. Advantageous effects of their abuse of it.*
- §. II. *How the Parliaments have been misemployed in demanding a reform. Discussion of the plan of the Sovereign Courts for a new administration. Insufficiency of the offer of those of Normandy. State of Franche-Comté as to taxes. Reasons for questioning the capacity of the bodies of Magistracy in the affair of Finances. Inconveniences of the receipt which they propose, as to the method, the produce, and the public welfare. Various speculations on the danger*

to which the King and the nation would be exposed, if the management of the finances, like the management of justice, was given to the Parliaments. Proofs of the exorbitance of the pretensions of the Sovereign Courts.

§. III. Examination of another plan pretty much the same as that of la Richeſſe de l'Etat, published in 1763. That this plan is copied from another of the last age. That it is contradictory, and the work of an honest man little versed in these matters. Discussion of the Poll-tax. Value of Porto-folios. That dissipation in the King's treasure is an incurable evil which has good effects. New and true idea of arts and commerce, and their produce. Very essential notions of the circulation of money. Balance-account of the commerce of France with all nations and countries. Value of the gold and silver that are in the Kingdom. Their estimate more just by the estimate of landed estates. Another plan more easy, more secure, and more advantageous for a new administration of the finances of France.

§. IV. Reflections on the debts of the King and the State. How easily the French are prepossessed in favour of what is brilliant. True idea of the debts of the State. That it is advantageous for France not to have been so well governed as she might be. Of what kind
is

is the reform that would promote her welfare. That the Farmers-General may be the best instruments of it. Magnificent idea of the improvement of the Kingdom by those means. Resources of France in case the Peace should not take place. The operations of the British and French Ministry in finance, compared. That the latter are mistaken as to the nature of this war.

MY LORD,

I DEFERRED my visit for a day, and I prolonged it three. I have passed four with the Financer, my instructor and my friend. How many of your days at Court would you not give for the small number of those which I have spent with that amiable and intelligent man in his hermitage. We were alone the first day. Some select acquaintances, whom he cultivates with care, were of our party the following days. I must be possessed of more skill than I have in the art of writing to be able to represent to your Lordship the wit and poignancy of these serious conversations. The fear of not succeeding in it, and the desire of being brief, induce me, if I may so say, to make a sketch of them. I had rather give you subjects unpolished than coarsely drawn.

drawn. Imagine that I have been a scholar greedy of instruction, and that my friend has been a master as complaisant as prudence would allow. I shall only communicate to you the explanations with which he was so kind as to indulge my curiosity. I wish, for your sake, that my want of address may neither augment nor diminish them. Your Lordship will excuse either of these, if either be the case.

§. I. "A total change in the imposition, assessment, and receipt of the King's revenue; and that all at once: this, Sir, gives us no uneasiness. If it took place, the worst that would happen to the Gentlemen of the Company of General-Farms, is, that they would be thanked, with some compliments, on the part of the King, as all their reward; and it would be a misfortune to those only, who, trusting too much to the future, have failed, through negligence or misconduct, to make their advantage of the past. They would be justly punished for their imprudence by the chagrin of seeing the most sensible of their colleagues in a peaceful state of opulence. As to the latter, restored to the cares of their families, and to the pleasures of enjoyment, they would imitate that † Minister of *Francis I.* who was not over-

† Marshal de Gié. See *Brantome*.

taken by disgrace, till after he had made every preparation for retiring. Like him, they would write on the gate of their castle, *The pilgrim has been caught in the rain in good time.*

“THE ignorant and the jealous exclaim, that the King should make all who have had a share in the management of his Finances refund, and that their forced restitutions will be sufficient to discharge the debts of the State. Observe, that these debts, of which the first leaven was in the reign of *Francis I.*, and which increased, in the reigns of *Lewis XIII* and *Lewis XIV.*, to more than two thirds of their present bulk, now amount to about two thousand millions of livres (ninety millions sterling.) I wish, for a moment, that we were as rich as the people imagine, who are always ready to exaggerate and to credit impossibilities on that subject. Certainly, it may well be supposed, that we could not, in so short a time, have obtained a great fortune, without having understanding and genius. Common sense, at least, will not be denied us. It should from thence be inferred, that we would not be so senseless as to leave the fruits of our labour and skill exposed to all that the hatred of the Public and the tribunals of Justice may undertake against us. *A such is the King's pleasure* is not current in our cause. The commands of his Majesty should

always be approved by equity. The despotism, which the last reign is reproached with having introduced, is not such as is ascribed to the Grand *Turk*. A letter *de cachet* may indeed force me from my house, may transport me into a dungeon, and leave me to rot there for the rest of my life. But the reason of state, which authorises the Monarch to keep to himself the secret of the punishment which he inflicts on my person, does not include my family and my heirs in the proscription. To seize my goods, and deprive me of them, I must be arraigned and tried in due form. Now, on this ground, any Financer, tolerably well advised, may defy all his enemies. The vexations, if there be any, in the collecting, are not to be placed to our account. The reason of them should be asked of our overseers. It was the concern of the Parliaments, who, instead of exclaiming, like the people, instead of censuring and reforming, which the King's Council alone has a right to do, should clandestinely have enquired into the conduct of the receivers and collectors, should have prepared the papers of their process, and have gone, by their deputies, as plaintiffs and solicitors, in the name of the people of their jurisdiction, to implore justice from his Majesty, and to demand the exemplary punishment of the oppressors of his subjects.

Those

Those august Assemblies would then have acted in their true character; and there is the utmost reason to presume, that justice would immediately have been granted. Passion, or zeal, made them depart out of their sphere. They pretended to be the natural Judges of the Intendants: It was certain, that the regal authority would not suffer itself to be infringed; by their rash pretension they warned the Court to be on its guard. The Financers are always allowed to except against those grand tribunals. Injustice perhaps is often found in the assessment; that again is not our concern. For that, the Gentlemen-Intendants alone are accountable. In short, we have no share in the impost, which the King's Ministers reserve to themselves entirely.

“WHAT therefore will be the research that is to be made into our means of acquiring, and our acquisitions? “We procured anticipations for the King at an exorbitant usury.” Agreed. These anticipations made a scarcity: they could not be procured for less interest. Are we in these affairs any more than the brokers of his Majesty's Ministers? Do we draw these sums from our own coffers? Are we the lenders? Our part is that of the Valet of the Miser's son. We find out some Master *Simons*, who are acquainted with some *Harpagons*; and we lament, like the faithful

Valet, the extremities to which our Master is reduced. Summoned to exhibit the progressive state of our fortune, we shall easily involve the summons with ridicule, by asking what books we are obliged to keep, except those of our accounts with the King. These we present: in them appears an exact state of the royal bills, of the contracts for mortgages, of assignments, creations of offices, rents, imposts, and other effects which have been given us to negotiate by the King's Ministers, on such and such conditions, which we have punctually fulfilled. Shall we be censured for these conditions? We wash our hands of them. We shall be accused of having been such Intendants as those of *Gil Blas*, and of having lent our Master his own money at an enormous interest. But that is not an accusation which will ruin us. It must be proved. All those bills are dispersed among the Public; and, impossible as it is to confront with us any **Descomulgado*, it must necessarily be supposed, that they were exchanged for the bags which we carried into the King's coffers. The terms of exchange and the gains of brokerage are impenetrable mysteries, which, besides, it would be indecent to require us to confess; as that would be calling in question

* An Usurer so called who figures in *Gil Blas*, Vol. I.
his

his Majesty's right and capacity in his engagements.

“ So much for what concerns us in opposition to the Public. Whatever chicaneries there may be at that tribunal, the King's Ministers will be our defenders. His Majesty must honour his bills, in order to preserve the credit of the State. He must keep, with all who are the holders of them, what he has promised us, that Government may not hereafter be deprived of its resources in rich individuals, natives and foreigners. All that he can allow himself, is to appeal, some time or other, to the laws and customs of *France* concerning usury, in order to free himself from the exorbitant interest to which urgent necessity obliged him to consent, and to reduce the annual rent and repayment of the capitals to the footing which the Divines, and the Courts of Justice, of the Kingdom admit. This reduction is indifferent to us, if we have been wise enough to have no interest in the royal bills; and we share the common lot of all other interested persons, if we have retained any part of them.

“ LET us suppose, however, that the cry of the ignorant and envious should be the strongest, and that we should be removed before a Court of Justice, which would be obliged to separate the King and his Mini-

sters in its proceedings. Do you think, that there are in the present generation more integrity and disinterestedness than there were in the past? What was the result of the proceeding against the Farmers in other reigns? Did the forced restitutions of some contribute to the relief of the people, or discharge the debts of the State? Yet, what were the Financiers in other reigns? Were they, as at present, one of the Orders of the nation, a powerful class, allied to those of the sword and the robe, and on a level with them? The Parliament of *Paris*, in its declamations and remonstrances, attacks us on all sides. It vilifies our families and our persons, it stigmatises our opulence and our ambition, it says that we sprung from nothing, and requires us to return to it. But has this august Assembly forgotten, that we have supplied it with more than half its members, that even the bearer of its remonstrances to the foot of the throne very lately took his brother-in-law from us, that the portions of almost all the wives of those gentlemen came out of the cash of the Farms, that the most illustrious families of the Kingdom intermix their blood with ours, that the *Bouillons*, the *Bethunes*, the *Cbaulnes*, and a hundred other houses of the same rank, depend on us, and make us depend on them, both as to honour and interest?

terest? A plan adopted by the King may extirpate the Order of the Finance; but the persons and fortunes of those who compose it have too many connections, to fear any shock. Shall delegated Magistrates pretend to stigmatise or plunder men whose inheritance and ignominy must be shared by the best part of the nation? Will their severity fall on such others, as, seeming of themselves to do justice to the State, will privately offer to compound with her by giving a considerable sum? Let it then continue to signalise itself over a small number newly come into the Farms, persons who stick at nothing, who have yet only given scope to their foolish pride, and who, like the frog in the fable, have puffed themselves up in order to attain the bulk of the principal persons of the Order. Is not this a fine lenitive which the Parliaments will procure for the people of *France*?

“BELIEVE me, the notion of our opulence, which is fondly cherished in the minds of the Public, is false, as far as regards our post of Farmers-General. True it is, that many of those gentlemen surpass in riches the noblest families in the kingdom; and the same may be said of a great number of Magistrates. Commerce, banking, dealings abroad, some speculations equally hazardous and lucky, some bold and wisely conducted

undertakings, in short, an industry, which, among all well-governed people, gives an incontestable right to legal property, have raised them to this high station; and I could quote you twenty Farmers-General, who having no other fortune than the produce of the Farms, are incessantly devising expedients to furnish their quota in the advances, and even to supply their household expences. The declamations against our luxury ought only to please us, by correcting us, and making us wiser. The nation should reject or stifle them as the imprudent clamours of malice and envy. This luxury is insolent and foolish, I allow. But whom does it injure? Will the people be better, if we live frugally? We do not endeavour to gain in order to cherish or increase our luxury and ostentation. We let it go because we gain it, and because we would partake with our heirs the pleasure of enjoying it. We thereby return in circulation the money for which we should more justly be reproached if we accumulated and buried it. "But we gain too much." Perhaps we may, and, in that point, we confess, that we are not of a different construction from other men, and that we draw from our situation every possible advantage. Were we to refuse it, others would not be wanting. Every one takes care of his own interest. The
Ecclesiastic

Ecclesiastic solicits preferments, the Courtier pensions and employments, the Officer promotion, the Magistrate prerogatives, the Merchant franchises and privileges, and the Financer good bargains.

§. II. "THE oppression and relief of the people, the discharge of the public debts, are the general cry. It is remarkable, that this cry prevails in circumstances, when an unsuccessful war, and the hardness of the conditions on which our victorious enemy offers peace, ought to inspire no other ideas than those of vengeance, no other sentiments than those of honour and courage. For this the trumpeters of the public clamour should account. Let them prove by fine and good arguments, if they can, that our fathers, in 1708 and 1709, lost the opportunity of asking *Lewis XIV* for relief and reform, and that the best time for remonstrances is in the midst of a foreign war. The misery of the people is ascribed to the extravagance of the imposition, the injustice of the assessment, and the bad method of collecting. The first is absolutely groundless: this I pledge myself to demonstrate. The second and third, which might possibly have some foundation, have none that is reasonable.

"MUCH has been said about two plans of reformation, of which I have made a

pretty exact analysis, by the help of some friends. One of them came from the Sovereign Courts, many of which have requested that the King taxing the Province once for whatever he might think it ought to pay, the assessment and the collection might be left to them†. The Courts of *Normandy*, for instance, undertook to return net, every year, into his Majesty's coffers forty millions of livres. This Province is deemed in Finance the sixth part of the Kingdom. Consequently, there would be two hundred and forty millions for the King, by making, as is reasonable, the other Provinces bear a proportionable part. The gentlemen of *Normandy* protest, that the people of that Province are capable of such an effort, in consideration of the war and its circumstances: they promise themselves from his Majesty's goodness some diminution at the peace. They affirm, that this scheme will fill the Province with joy and gratitude. I believe them; it would have reason to be satisfied. But would the State and the King be so? The late Marshal *de Belleisle* demanded no less than one hundred and fifty

[† A plan similar to this has been proposed as a compromise in the dispute on taxation between *Great Britain* and her colonies: viz. the sum to be named by the King and Parliament, and the mode of raising, collecting it, &c. to be left to the Provincial Assemblies.]
millions

millions for the campaign of 1760, and the interest of the national debt carries away annually a hundred more. How shall the King be able to support the other expences of Government? The Courts of *Normandy*, which in their heavy lamentations dwell on the assessment and collection, would have us think that their Province was extremely favoured in the imposition, as they think they give their equivalent by giving forty millions. *Franche-Comté*, which is not reckoned in Finance the fortieth part of the Kingdom, is taxed at near fifteen millions, and his Majesty there enjoys it, besides his demesns, his woods, and his salt-pits. Yet that Province, which has scarce any assistance from arts and commerce, is a privileged Province, by its capitulation with *Lewis XIV* †. The error into which the Courts of *Normandy* have fallen is so striking, that their proposal needs not be discussed. They seem to have passed sentence in a cause, without examining any evidence. Let us only consider the principles and consequences of that kind of arrangement which they propose.

“ I WISH there was no occasion to criticise the zeal and patriotism of those respectable

† [In 1674, when it was taken by that Prince, and dismembered from the *Austrian-Spanish* Monarchy.]

bodies,

bodies, which at present style themselves *the Classes of the Parliament of the King, or of the Kingdom*. I allow them to be the advocates of the people, and the supporters of the Regal authority. I will not pretend to conjecture, that, being composed of men, who, no doubt, have their frailties like others, relationship, the ties of friendship, family-interests, might render some of them partial in the assessment, and that there might be on their side an acceptance of persons, which is not to be apprehended from an Intendant, generally a stranger in the Province. But without failing in the respect which every good *Frenchman* owes to those august Assemblies, I may doubt whether their insight into these subjects is as clear, as their good intentions are certain: I may doubt, not only whether they have thoroughly examined that immense variety of particulars, in which the longest experience is every day bewildered, but also whether they have seen the three principal operations of Finance in those important points of view which policy assigns them.

“It is very probable, that, by means of its connections with the inferior Courts of Justice of its district, a Parliament may make the assessment on those who are liable to it, with the greatest equity and the most exact precision;

precision; which the Intendants and their deputies scarce ever do, for reasons which need not be mentioned. But will the Parliament make the collecting a job, or annex a salary to it? In the first case, it will be exposed to more violences and distraining, than we are reproached with suffering in ours; and the levying will continue to be odious. In the second case, the collecting will be expensive; which is the great grievance laid to our charge. In consideration of the stipend that will be assigned him, the Receiver ought to give security for the money that will pass through his hands; and being made accountable for the deficiencies, a Member of Parliament will not be more pitiable than a Farmer.

“THE public debt is charged on various objects, of which the burthens laid on Finance in its different departments are not the least considerable. The charges in the department of the Finances make a large article. On suppressing them, they must be reimbursed; for an absolute annihilation would be unjust; and the continuation of the stipends, when the incumbent is dismissed, would be an additional burthen to the State. The reformation demanded by the Parliaments would therefore require, as a preliminary, the reimbursement of a capital

tal of above two hundred millions: Where is that sum to be found? I would ask those august Assemblies, if I thought their zeal equal to such a trial.

“BUT the essential part of the scheme proposed falls under the cognisance of policy at large, of that which ought to take care that the monarchical constitution be not impaired. Six or seven centuries, and an almost miraculous concurrence of the most fortunate circumstances, were necessary to annihilate the feudal government, which might be styled that of tyrants, to deliver the people from the merciless yoke of the Nobility and Clergy, to form, in short, of the inhabitants of *France* a nation in which each individual is deemed a man. It is an edifice, whose preservation is equally dear to the King and to his subjects. Every patriot is under an obligation to spread the alarm on the least appearance of danger, as the first citizen who discovers a fire is obliged to call for help. This truth, by means of which so many remonstrances pass, will, no doubt, plead my excuse with the Parliaments for the discussion which I have ventured to make of the scheme which would take from the monarchical constitution the influence in Government which would be given to them by the
the

the commission which certainly they demand in the plainest manner possible.

By means of the *Paulette*, an annual duty paid by the Magistrates to the King of the sixtieth penny of the Finance of their department, the offices of Magistracy are hereditary, or nearly so. If the Court should agree to that composition for the impost, the two other operations of Finance annexed to the Magistracy, would, in like manner, become hereditary. But what would not the King and the three Orders of the Kingdom have to fear from a class, or a small number of citizens detached from those three Orders, which would have in its hands a title to the hereditary deposit of the treasures of the State and the fortunes of individuals? The Equestrian Order in ancient *Rome* was nothing to what the Magistracy would then be in *France*. The spirit of the body among the *Roman* Knights was always subordinate to private interest: they were Financers dispersed throughout *Rome* and the Provinces of the Empire: they had severe judges in the Patricians, jealous and vigilant enemies in the Plebeians. The Magistracy of *France*, divided into several bodies, has plainly declared, that, for the future, they will form only one. They have already acted in concert, as well in complaisance as in opposition to the
will

will of the Sovereign. They have their signals, their watch-word of rallying under one common banner: they have a drum intended to quiet the impatient in any crisis. However, they are as yet only the depositaries of the civil laws. What would they be, if they should also be the depositaries of the laws of the State and of the King's revenues?

“ THERE is nothing new under the sun: what has been will be, and what is has been. The events which occasion revolutions resemble the litanies of some Saints, in which nothing can be changed but the names. The Sovereign Courts of the Kingdom, I repeat, are animated with the purest zeal, the most disinterested patriotism. The disciples of St. *Benedict* and St. *Bernard* were holy personages in the first age of their establishment in *France*. Their scholars have long been sluggards and libertines. Nothing could be more humble and poor than the Bishops of the first Christian Century in *France*; their successors have long been tyrants, proud, greedy, and unjust. What more lamb-like than the first Jesuits? What more wolf-like than those who have succeeded them? It is by numberless observations of this kind, that the Sovereign and his Ministers should principally govern themselves in the permanent acts of interior administration. They ought
to

to embrace an immense hereafter, and provide for future generations as well as for the present. In the demand of the Sovereign Courts, the King should see what escapes them, the possibility of the return of a dependence which has so long been a misfortune to the people. He should see that he is offered no good security for his successors, that the Kingdom shall never again be plunged in the confusion of minorities, and in the troubles of civil wars; that, for the future, it is left in obscurity whether the Court and the Parliaments shall ever go farther than letters of jussion and remonstrances.

“ If the receipt of the royal treasures be not in the hands of the King, how, in a time of trouble, shall the Court defend the King's revenue against the arrêts of distress and prohibition on the cash, a proceeding of which we have had so many examples in times of trouble, and chiefly in those of the minority of *Lewis XIV*? If the King should, once for all, compound with his people, how will the proportion of the contributions be adapted to the variations in the wealth of the Kingdom and to the necessities of the State? How are the anticipations to be made in times of distress? On what conditions will the Parliament, become administrators, agree to an additional charge? Will not the demand

demand which his Majesty will make of it, induce those Assemblies to examine how the money received has been employed, and how that which the conjunctures are said to require is destined? Thus the King, you see, will become accountable, not to his people, but to a small part of his people, which will arrogate to itself the right of inspection, and, one may say, of protection, over his operations. With you, the Sovereign has only one Assembly to manage; and sometimes his Ministers know not what to do in order to rout the party which opposes the views of his *Britannic* Majesty. The King of *France* would have the management and the patience of his Ministers exercised by fourteen, where the same leaven would produce the fermentation of a hundred different kinds.

“ EVERY five years the mass of gold and silver, which comes into circulation from *America* and the mines of *Europe*, sensibly increases; the price of every thing increases in proportion, and with it the expences of the State. The King's composition with his Provinces will therefore be only a new kind of General-Farms under another name; it will only be a lease for a term; and the difference of that future so much wished from the present time so decried, will consist in this, that the Farmers, who have hitherto been accountable

able to the King and his Ministers, will be accountable only to themselves. For to whom will the Parliaments and the other Sovereign Courts, who will divide the Provinces between them, give an account of their operations? Will the King erect tribunals to which his Parliaments should be amenable, and resort for responsibility? No, without doubt. But if the Parliaments occasion malecontents, and it would be absurd to doubt it, to whom will these aggrieved persons have recourse? Will it be to the Parliaments themselves, who are the Sovereign Courts of distributive justice? Then the King will have delivered his people to some Lieutenants, over whom he will not have reserved to himself even the right of inspection! His Majesty will then have cut asunder the dearest tie that can be between him and his people!

“To quote the * State-Countries is foreign to the purpose. The resemblance does not hold, as in those privileged Provinces the three States vote alike; and if they are so by sufferance, they can only take it to themselves. Besides, they have always

* [Those Provinces, which have preserved the right of taxing themselves by their deputies.]

at hand a remedy for the evil, having the power of redressing the bad measures pursued by one assembly in the assembly ensuing. I wish the Parliaments of the other Provinces would observe what rank is held, what figure is made, by the Parliament of a State-Province assembled. They would lose the whim of quoting, in favour of their pretensions, the ancient customs and ancient discourses of our Kings. The resemblance between the States of a Province and its Parliament not being parallel, how do those august Assemblies understand the demand of imposts by the great? Do they imagine that the King can alienate his right of Sovereignty? The State-Countries, submitting to his predecessors, made a capitulation, which could not be corrected or annulled without the consent of the two parties, and which otherwise must be observed, whether it be burthensome to the Prince, or disadvantageous to the Province. The state of the other Provinces, which submitted to the dominion of our Kings without reserve, is unchangeable. The King is responsible for it to his posterity, to his successors, to the nation; and he cannot in any manner alter his prerogative.

“ To go farther: If the Sovereign Courts refuse to raise the composition either at the
end.

end of five years, or in such circumstances as require it; how will they be obliged to it? How, without their concurrence, will the people be made to relish it? How, in short, will the method and system be changed, when that of compounding with the great bodies shall be shewn with all its defects? To imagine, that those bodies will acknowledge their having solicited and obtained from the royal favour what they ought not to solicit nor obtain from it, is not to know men, and especially those of an assembly. What a strange ferment would there be in the Kingdom, if his Majesty should substitute, to a disposition made in concert with his Parliaments, a plan which would excite their complaints and remonstrances? What a diminution of the regal authority, if, through condescension, his Majesty were obliged to adopt a scheme opposite to his judgment and intention? By insensible degrees, the King of *France*, who is at the head of the purest Monarchy, would find himself in a worse condition than a King of *England*, whose Monarchy is Aristo-democratic. A Pensioner-King in time of peace, a Commander of the army and a hired General in time of war, limited in his fortune and power on both occasions like the head of a Republic, he would be reduced to the sad and dangerous policy

policy of always endeavouring to excite foreign wars, and to foment divisions in the first Orders of the State, to cabal among his subjects. The History of your *Stuart-Kings* and your imagination inform you how far this first alteration of a constitution purely Monarchical may be carried."

ON my retiring in the evening, I asked my friend for some documents to convince me that the Sovereign Courts have really formed the pretensions that he has ascribed to them, pretensions of which I had no idea, which I had never even suspected. He communicated to me, among other pieces of that nature, the remonstrances of the Chamber of Accounts to the King, of *July 1760*. The following are the articles which appeared to me the most remarkable.

"THIS Assembly says, in the eighth place; that, in a Monarchical Government, where the property of estates is the first law, to introduce an unlimited power of imposing and collecting, is to attack it in its principles. It says, in the ninth place, that to obviate the duration of the collection, and to reconcile with the exhausted condition of the people the necessity of succouring the State, his Majesty has no other method than to demand of the Province of *Normandy* an annual tribute substituted in the room of all others,

others, laid by the Province itself on all who are taxable †, and paid directly to his Majesty, without passing through the hands of Farmers: that the King will find, in this expedient, the supplies which he asks, and the relief of his people which he desires. This Chamber of Accounts says, in the tenth article, that of what nature soever the imposts are, their repetition cannot be just, moderate, and little susceptible of abuse, unless it be subordinate to the authority of the tribunals, which by the laws of the Kingdom were established for the maintenance of good order in the Finances; and that to admit judges who have no other rule but their will, is to endanger the state of the citizens and the interests of *Normandy*."

I BELIEVE, my Lord, and more sincerely than the Financer, that the intentions of this body of Magistrates are pure and upright; and that this very thing has prevented their perceiving the inconveniences of the measure which they propose. The Financer has stated them very justly, and the tenth article has supplied him with the idea of the conduct which he thinks the Sovereign Courts ought to have observed, to obtain satisfaction for the excesses committed in the assessment

† See p. 226.

and collection. The tribunals quoted by the Gentlemen of *Normandy* were instituted by the Kings, and not by the laws of the Kingdom, the admitting a reciprocal and synonymous relation between the law and the King's pleasure, excepted. Those tribunals were instituted to notify and maintain the order assigned by the Sovereign, and by no means to establish or correct it. By departing from this true principle, the Sovereign Courts would have struck a master-stroke, by collecting all the proofs of the misdemeanors, vexations, extortions, outrages of the Financers, and their assigns, and by bringing to the foot of the throne those documents, of which they should have prayed his Majesty to order the hearing in his Council, admitting them to be parties for the accused. In this case, I do not see what the favour of the Court could have done to screen the guilty from punishment, and the abuses from reformation. The Sovereign Courts did not recollect, that, during the troubles of the minority of *Lewis XIV*, the Court chose rather to suppress the office of Provincial Intendants, than to suffer the Parliaments to make themselves judges of those Officers of the King.

§. III. "THE other plan of a general reform in the Finances is a kind of foundling,

ling, thrown out at a venture †, to try the disposition of the Public. It proposes a proportional poll-tax, laid chiefly on persons of substance, by which means, the abolition of all the taxes would render the Farmers-General, and the General Farms, useless. This is far from being new. The original is above a hundred years old: it had its rise in the Ministry of Cardinal *Mazarin* ‡. Its author, who has remained in obscurity, proposed no less than to abolish the * *Tailles*, the

† It was this that made so much noise in 1763 under the title of *La Richesse de l'Etat*. It was half-published two years before, and the *Sieur de Courcelles* presented it to the Duke of *Wirtemberg* for the augmentation of his revenues.

‡ Could Sir *Robert* be ignorant, that this project, which in 1763 had the graces of novelty throughout *Paris*, is much older than the Regency of *Anne of Austria*? The History of *M. de Thou* proves, that a like plan was offered to the States of *Blois* in the year 1577. It consisted in abolishing all the taxes, and in substituting in their place an impost of fifteen millions a year on all Fires, [like the *English* Hearth-Tax in the last century] so that the Fire taxed the highest should pay fifty livres, and that taxed the lowest twelve pence, a year. The Patriot-Historian expresses himself in the following terms: *The chimerical project of these avaricious men miscarried. It was examined in several assemblies, its roguery was discovered, and it was absolutely rejected.* [A scheme of the like kind for substituting one proportional tax, instead of all others, was also proposed in *England* some years ago by Sir *Matthew Decker*.]

* [A sum paid yearly by every householder according to his substance and family.]

Excise, the Salt-Duties, in short, every object of Farming and Administration, the Farms and Administration themselves, so as only to preserve the demesns, with the customs. He compensated the taxes of every kind by a poll-tax of one sol a day on the rich and persons in easy circumstances, including both under the name of Substantial, whom he reckoned to amount to six millions of souls. Perhaps, in a profound peace the Government might have paid some attention to the scheme. But in a critical juncture, it passed for a foolish conceit; and that character has been fixed upon it. The quickness and ease of collecting are never more necessary than on urgent occasions; but the urgency of those occasions is the very thing which prevents their being then established. There is no time to sow at the moment when we should reap.

“NOT to mention that our Reformer is no more than a copier, let us see whether he gives any thing better than his predecessor. The latter procured his Majesty only a revenue of a hundred and ten millions of livres, and this writer promises him seven hundred. Certainly his offer deserves the preference. He supposes two millions of taxable persons, whom he divides into twenty classes. In the ten first he places those who have fortunes below the medium, or very moderate

moderate fortunes; and he confines their poll-tax collectively to a hundred millions. He finds six hundred of them in the million of souls which compose his ten other classes. Let us hasten to send this schemer to his predecessor, that we may not found our arguments on conceits absolutely chimerical.

“ I MAKE no doubt, that *Paris*, reckoned the twentieth part of the Kingdom, does not contain the twentieth part of the number of taxable persons intended. Yet there is a deception in the project in this respect, even allowing the estimation. Certainly there are in *Paris* five thousand men who would be very glad to be acquitted to the King for an annual poll-tax of seven hundred and thirty livres. But the projector should recollect, that he requires, besides this class of the greatest opulence, nine other inferior classes, whose poll-tax descends, by gradation, from seven hundred and twenty to four hundred and fifty livres, which makes a total of thirty millions, for which he must find forty-five thousand other Substantials. But let us not treat him with chicanery. I applaud the notion which he has of the wealth of the Capital. I only charge with absurdity the proportion which he establishes between that and the Kingdom. *Paris* perhaps does not make more than a twentieth part of the

M 2

Kingdom,

Kingdom, as to population. But it is more than a tenth by opulence and circulation. That requires no proof. The most powerful land-holders who reside in it, there waste their revenues, of which they rob the country. The Offices of State, the Tribunals of justice and oeconomy, that crowd of foreigners and of country-people, whom curiosity, business, and a taste for arts and pleasures draw thither and detain there, the retail trade, which luxury, fashion, and good cheer supply with subjects, the expences of the Court, those of the household of the Princes and Grantees, that multitude of Officers of every department, in short, all the advantages which are peculiar to a Capital, place *Paris*, in every article, except the number of its inhabitants, out of proportion with the rest of the Kingdom. Would you not laugh in *England* at any of your politicians, who should pretend to make *London* be deemed, in every respect, the seventh part of *Great Britain*, because it has within its circumference a seventh part of the people of the three Kingdoms? No more then of the inference, drawn in the plan, of the opulence and abilities of the Provinces above the riches and means of the Capital.

“ THE question is to know whether the tax shall be on the individuals, or only on the chiefs, of a family. We may chuse.
The

The author seems to hint the latter, and to require the former; he is confused. If the poll-tax be laid on the chiefs of families, it is a monster of injustice. Would it not be most unequal to have a family of fifty thousand livres income acquitted to the King and the State by the gift of the sixtieth part of its revenue? If it be on individuals, the rich man will be assessed for himself and his children; he will then not be acquitted for seven hundred and thirty livres a year. How is the poll-tax of those minors who have no property, to be assessed? Will it be on the estate of the father? But then it is no longer such a poll-tax as the plan declares. This will be a proportional tax. How then are the classes to be formed and preserved? If the tax be on the chiefs of families, will there be found a million of such citizens capable of contributing for the part assigned them? If it be on individuals, the most numerous family will be the most burthened. The wealthy batchelor, the rich man who has no children, will be as nothing in the contribution. I know few chimeras more chimerical than this plan.

“WHERE are those rich Porto-folios, whose possessors freely enjoyed the safety which the King procures to the land-holders and the citizens at such great expence? What

do these Porto-folios contain? *Paris* harbours eight-tenths of those opulent bill-holders who are natives. The paper of all the stockholders of that kind is at the expence of the King and the State, or at the expence of the proprietors of lands, and of the various persons employed in the different departments of Government. All underwent reductions in their incomes proportionably to the taxes charged on the fund, and to those which the edicts and ordinances carry. They allow their debtor on the interest of their capital their quota of the tax which he pays to the State. If a particular tax be farther imposed on them in their proper and private name, it ought to be moderate, as they will be made to pay twice for the same object. If not, the interest of money will be raised, which is already too high. Besides, those rich Porto-folios go for nothing in the mass of the riches of the Kingdom. The annuitant, the mortgagee, the creditor of the tontines and lotteries, the pensioner of State, the officers of every department, all the substantial people, who now would be ranged in a separate class from the possessors who are natives, share with the land-holders the income of the lands, with the King the taxes which he levies on his people. It is not their concern, if their capitals are dissipated or
exist

exist no longer. They are creditors who hold a mortgage at the charge of the King or of the subjects. Their opulence is so much taken from that of his Majesty, and of the other debtors. But it does not suppose a penny the more in the total of our effects. To reckon both the produce of the earth, and the mortgage with which it is charged, as existing effects, is to place in the column of substance both the ready money and credit of the merchant.

“ WE will not dwell on those who have placed their capitals in foreign funds. First, the object is inconsiderable. Either from distrust, from reason, or from ignorance, we are not much interested in affairs abroad; and it would be easy to count the *French*, who, thinking it their interest to conceal a part of their wealth, have sent a part of their fortune out of the country. Secondly, whatever be their number, I do not see how a tax could with equity and certainty be imposed upon them.

“ OUR author does not say how he would settle the collection. I have read, that, to avoid the re-imbursment of the charges of the finances, he proposes to preserve them with their ancient emoluments, which would increase on the former footing, in proportion to the money that comes into the hands of the

incumbent. This would be a superabundant advantage, to estimate the labour of the Receiver, not with respect to the difficulty of the receipt, but to the quantity of money that he shall receive. It is chiefly on this head that we are chargeable with misconduct: this is the part of the yoke that galls the people. Hence the two sols for a livre, and the other clippings, which extend even to blood. To save the pay of Officers, we grant them so much per cent. profit on that which goes into their chest. This profit must be taken from the King, or the people; and it is taken from them both. How does the Reformer contrive to perpetuate this ruinous abuse? But this proceeds from his being afraid of the reimbursement which ought to attend the suppression of expences. Let us proceed. The hateful charges which divert the clear money of the State will be the same. But the objects and the management will be different. The fortunes of sixty Farmers-General will be retrenched or annihilated: I set the gain at twenty millions. Forty thousand deputies, who maintained themselves and their families by their salaries, will be cashiered and disbanded: let us style that also a gain, and reckon it at thirty millions. For that the King is promised to have four or five hundred millions annually brought into his coffers
more

more than they now receive. This important purpose is pretended to be gained by relieving the people, by completing their happiness ! In exchange for a vast additional burthen, what do you see more than fifty millions taken out of the hands of the Farmers-General and their people ? But, pray, observe what use they made of that sum. Was it sent abroad ? Was it buried in the coffers of the Farmers ? No. It was taken from one part of the people in order to be given to another who returned it in circulation. The thing is not just in itself. But in regard to the State and the Nation, it is less than indifferent.

“ It is a fact, that of one livre raised for the State, scarce eleven sols and a half, (that is, little more than half) enter into the King's coffers. This dissipation is no new thing. Cardinal *de Richelieu* saw it pretty much the same in his time; and viewing it with the eyes of a Statesman, he called it a necessary evil. It seems to me that it was his opinion that the people must necessarily be squeezed, and that it was not proper that the King should draw all that juice into his treasury. I will not undertake to comment on that famous Politician. On sight of the country it may be conjectured, that between five and six hundred millions are raised in the King-

dom in the King's name. I am inclined to believe, that scarce three hundred of them come into his Majesty's coffers; and I maintain, that the Kingdom would be ruined in ten years, if all the taxes reached the Royal Treasury without any diminution, without any pillage.

“LET us lay aside, for a moment, the vexations, the oppressions, in short, all the excesses perhaps too justly imputed to the management of the Farms. I am very far from thinking, that there is in that respect no need nor method of reformation. The three hundred millions dissipated are perpetually in circulation, by means of the consumption of individuals who owe their fortunes to these gains. The specie changes hands, perhaps, ten times a day. The same sum produces itself again incessantly; and the crown which enters the chest of the Receivers the last day of *December* will be brought thither again in value twenty or thirty times in the year. Take away the additional charge which the collecting occasions, those three hundred millions will remain in stagnation in the chests of the Substantial. Take away dissipation, they will be buried in the coffers of parsimony, which then will resemble the lion's den, from which no traces of return are seen. Suppose that the King, who will receive five hundred

hundred millions a year, employs the savings of ten years to discharge the debts of the State, and that, during the ten succeeding years, he keeps in his coffers the saving which he may make of a fifth of his revenues: Is it not evident, that, in ten years, he only will be rich, and that his people will advance in misery and indigence in proportion as he advances in wealth? Is it not evident, that, money becoming more scarce, the value of every thing will diminish; that every one will retrench from his superfluity; that, insensibly, being at ease will consist in not wanting necessities; that there will no longer be any plentiful subsistence except for the husbandman, the landlord and the tenant; that, in short, the King being master of all the money of his Kingdom, commerce and the arts will have no other funds than those which he will please to lend them, unless in that space of time we should receive from abroad a mass of gold and silver pretty near equal to that which is now in circulation? But with that we cannot flatter ourselves.

“THE deception concerning arts and commerce is extremely great. They are springs of circulation, and it is thought that they contribute to the mass. Their produce is certainly considerable, and to such a degree, that general misery would be the consequence of
of

of their decay. But it is because we derive from them some conveniences and superfluities, which we have made ourselves necessities, and the returns from which are the only fund of subsistence to numbers of people. It will not be pretended, that the sales and barter in the inland part of the Kingdom add to the quantity of our gold and silver. All that results from them is, that it is put in motion, that it is distributed, dispersed. Its increase, if it receives it by trade, can only proceed from foreign trade. Let us enter into a short examination of the particulars. We draw money from our trade with *Spain*. This money is given us in exchange for various merchandises with which we help to form the cargo of the galleons; and it generally amounts to an annual sum of ten millions of livres. The *English* and *Dutch* have long supplanted us in supplying the inner part of *Spain*. Let us, however, reckon that we still have a profit there of between four and five millions. We compensate, by the wages of our peasants of *Guienne* who go to harvest-work in *Navarre* and *Galicia*, the discount on the piastres, and the purchase of many materials with which our soil does not furnish our manufactures. Thus we shall make our trade with *Spain* amount to an annual profit of fifteen millions of livres in specie, or in bars.

“ It

“ IT is long since we have had any thing to do with *Portugal*. The duties on the exportation of our dried fruits and sweet-mears give the *Italians* the advantage of this trade with the people of the North; and all that we can do with them in other branches does not retrieve the money which the spiritual commodities of the Court of *Rome* annually draw from the Kingdom.

“ WE are too happy if our trade with the *English* be on a par in time of peace. Their tobacco, their pewter, their wrought steel, their horses, and their coals answer the exchange of our wines and brandies. We consume more of their iron-ware than they do of ours. We are even so blind, as to esteem their woollen cloths, their stuffs and their silk hose, their painted callicoes, their flannels and their caps. More than once we have been obliged to make a resource of their corn and meal. We are fond of taking from them, even at *Paris*, oysters which we have as good, and in plenty, on our coasts. It is very certain, that we might live entirely without them, and lay them under the necessity of bringing us their money for our provisions which are necessary to them. But this we are far from doing. We have voluntarily deprived ourselves of our tobacco,, we neglect the mines of various metals

tals and of coals, which our mountains conceal. The art of making the finest steel, of which M. de *Reaumur* published the discovery, does not perhaps return to the Kingdom the pension of twelve thousand francs, with which the inventor was justly rewarded by the King. Our breed of horses is entirely lost, and with the most excellent pastures for horses of every kind of use, which foreigners envy us, we are at the mercy of foreigners for remounting our armies, for the chase, for the manage, and even for the sets of the luxurious.

"THE *Dutch* have enough fish, salt and dried, cheese and spiceries, to have always the balance with us in their favour. They have learned to do almost entirely without our salt: they make a very small consumption of our manufactures; they carry on a great part of our own coasting trade; and our want of them for remittances of money to *Germany* and the North almost always keeps the exchange above par against us in their favour.

"SINCE the duty imprudently laid on our *Brouage* and marsh salt, the *Swedes* have taken in their freight at *Trica*, and their copper and their wood constantly put us in arrears with them. *Denmark* keeps us continually so by her interior oeconomy. The allurements of
the

the slender profit which the country of *Bourdeaux* affords us, deprives us of the refinement of sugars, which that precious country (which is not to be found elsewhere) seems to have granted from us in a monopoly to all *Europe*. We sell it to the *Hamburgers*, whose city has more works of that kind than the whole Kingdom of *France*. We should be no better with *Russia* than with *Sweden* and *Denmark*, if the magnificence of the Imperial Court was not advantageous to us.

“ Our trade with *Germany* depends on peace and war; and in both cases, the subsidies leave us nothing to receive from its mines. The rage of fashion even threatens us with seeing its wines obtain with us the preference to our own. The only real gain which we can make with the nations of *Europe* is reduced to that which foreign luxury and the taste of fashion occasion to the manufactures of *Lyons* and to the artisans of *Paris*, and to the money spent in the Capital by travellers who are drawn thither by the love of arts and pleasures, by the mildness and levity of our manners. Do you think that this is an equivalent for the expence of the King's Ministers in foreign Courts, for that of the subsidies which the interest of the State obliges his Majesty to distribute there, and for that of the consumption of our armies beyond the frontier?

“ THERE

“THERE remains then, to augment the mass of our gold and silver, the produce of our commerce in the three other parts of the world, added to that of *Spain*. It is a fact, that we pay for the corn of *Barbary* in ready money, and that our settlements on all that coast are still in their infancy. A thousand or twelve hundred negroes, and some pounds of gold dust, composed, with gums and ivory, the returns of our traffic on the coast of *Guinea*, in the time of our prosperity. We bring back neither gold nor silver from the *Levant*. *India* gives us only some commodities prejudicial to our manufactures, in exchange for the silver which we carry thither. A little salt-petre and indigo, and some diamonds, are not so necessary to us, as to give us reason to congratulate ourselves on the benevolence of the Nabobs who allow us to purchase them. You know too well the subtlety of the *Chinese*, and the contempt which they have for our manufactures, not to own that we gain nothing from them. From *Japan* we are excluded; we are not yet acquainted with *Coréa*. We are scarce suffered to stay at the *Philippines* and *Java*, when the winds detain us in those latitudes. We have no correspondence in the South-Sea. We scarce shew ourselves on the coasts and in the ports of *Brasil*. *Guiana* is still as new a country

country to us as that of the *Patagonians*. The contraband trade on the coast of the *Caraccas*, and in the gulph of *Mexico*, is no small object. I value it at a million of francs. This is setting it at its full worth.

“SUGAR, indigo, coffee, and cocoa being become part of the necessaries of life, we should set a high price on what we bring from our Islands, if we were obliged to purchase them. But those Colonies are a part of the Kingdom; and their productions are objects of consumption which we exchange for manufactures, and for the produce, either natural or factitious, of our Provinces. The whole should be ranked in the class of internal commerce. If we furnish *Switzerland* with sugars, the profit which we receive from it is scarce an equivalent to that which the *Dutch* steal from us by supplying with that *American* commodity the greatest part of *Alsace* and *Lorrain*.

“I WISH it was as easy for us, as for the *English*, to ascertain, by the Directors of our Mints, the quantity of gold and silver turned into specie by our Kings. But can we, like them, know what we have left? Before this war, guineas were as scarce on the continent as medals. But at present, the *Austrian Netherlands* give ten sols more for them than for our louis d'ors. While our gold and silver coin,

coin, old and new, is in *Switzerland*, the *Low-Countries*, *Germany*, and the North, the most common money. The Jews and the Mint-masters of several *German* Princes have melted down a prodigious number. The maintenance of the King's armies beyond the *Rhine* has carried out of our country, for many years, a great part of the sums which have been sent to them. It is granting too much to allow, that the mass of circulation, which is reckoned at fifteen hundred millions, is thirteen hundred millions of livres, or about sixty millions of pounds sterling.

“BUT is all this mass wholly in circulation? Do not avarice and distrust bury a considerable part of it? The universal clamour of the want of specie leaves no room to doubt it. The immoderate luxury of the Financers, and that which has prevailed in all the classes of the nation, put in perpetual motion the gold and silver that are in trade. The circulation, which is continual, from the subjects to the King and from the King to the subjects, has multiplied the tender of money raised in the King's name. The payments daily made to the King, the extorsions imputed to the Financers, cannot consequently occasion a considerable void. We are therefore less rich than our bold calculators pretend, who assure, that the King-
dom,

dom, which has not for forty years past opened any new communication, whose commerce has received no increase, which, on the contrary, has sustained a rude shock in that particular by the manufactures of *Denmark*, *Prussia*, and *Austria*, and by this unfortunate war, is at this day richer by three hundred millions than it was forty years ago. There is a more certain method of valuing our real substance.

“THE Kingdom is reckoned at seventy millions of acres of land, since the acquisition of *Lorraine*. Allowing that there is not an inch of it which is not valuable, it would be absurd to rate the land of the *Cevennes*, of *Dauphiny*, *Berry*, the country of *Foix*, *Béarn*, &c. half *Champagne*, and all *Lorraine*, on the same footing with the fields of *Brie* and *Beauce*, which the neighbourhood of the Capital makes inestimable. I value therefore every acre at an annual rent of ten francs, all the expences of culture deducted. This amounts to seven hundred millions. I reckon at half that sum the annual ground-rent of the cities and towns, and at a fifth the value which art gives to the productions of the bowels of the earth. Let us estimate at a hundred millions the produce of our islands. The whole makes about thirteen hundred millions [or sixty millions sterling]

ling] and that I call our real Substance. Hence is formed the mass of circulation, which is nothing more than a shuttlecock from the husbandman to the landlord and tenant, from them to tradesmen and artisans, and from all these classes to the King, as well as from the King to all these classes. Our oeconomy in our internal consumption has made us gain by foreigners. Gold and silver have increased in quantity among us, in proportion as we have drawn it from abroad in exchange for our commodities.

“I HAVE seen a Table drawn up by another schemer for a poll-tax on the proprietors of the funds. This deserves some indulgence, were it only for apprehending that the tax which this class of citizens would pay to the State necessarily draws with it a proportional tax of the individuals of every other class. This truth cannot be contested, since all the fluttering, all the variations in the employment of money tend to the consumption of the necessaries of life. At the worst, some arts, whose works derive their greatest value from genius and taste, would be exempted; and that would be no evil. This Table supposes in the Kingdom a hundred persons who have, independently of posts under the Government and places at Court, an annual income of a hundred thousand crowns, and
twenty

twenty whose income may amount to a million of livres. This is fifty millions. It supposes three hundred who have in like manner a hundred thousand livres income: this is thirty millions more. He alleges five hundred from fifty to a hundred thousand; and fixes them at [a medium of] seventy-five thousand: here are thirty-eight millions more. He supposes two thousand from twenty-five to fifty thousand livres income; and he allows each of them thirty-seven thousand: here are seventy-four millions. He assigns fifteen thousand livres income to ten thousand whose revenue he supposes to be from ten to twenty thousand livres: here are a hundred and fifty millions. He reckons fifty thousand from five to ten thousand livres income, and sets them at eight thousand; this is four hundred millions more. Lastly, he thinks, that there may be a hundred thousand who have from two to five thousand; and he allows them four: here are four hundred millions more. He sets down as a total of a hundred millions those who have from a thousand to three thousand, and for the same, those who have from a hundred to a thousand livres income. This, in the whole, is an annual Substance of about thirteen hundred millions. I would gladly submit this Table to be criticised by

by the man of twenty classes †, charging him to form each of his of a hundred thousand taxable persons. Let him fix the profits so uncertain, and the gains so variable, of industry. But above all, let him shew exactly how much real it adds to the mass of gold and silver in circulation. Let him prove an increase of substance in the volume of those rich Porto-folios from which he flatters himself with drawing so great a resource....”

It was easy, my Lord, for me to perceive that the Financer and his friends took fire, and would not be contradicted. Impatient of drawing them from those speculations which could not command my attention, I applauded their reasoning. My Host believed me on his side, and assuming a tone of patriotism, which on any other occasion would have made me burst into laughter, he proceeded :

“ To what purpose so great an expence of fancy and calculation, if they only mean to explain the three operations of Finance? There are many plans which have neither the difficulties nor the inconveniences of this. We are not so vile in our own eyes as to look on the religion of an oath as nothing. Let

† See p. 242.

every chief of a family be enjoined to estimate and to declare himself his annual Substance, and that in all conditions and professions. Let him be obliged to pay a fourth of it to the State, if it be in land, or houses; a third, if it be in leases of rents; and a sixth, if it proceeds from industry. This assessment is dictated by equity, after examining the nature of the funds. The tradesman and the artisan, the farmer and the manufacturer, undergo fatigues, run risks, must act with prudence, and create, in a manner, the property on which the State has a claim and makes them pay for its protection. The land-holder, more interested than all these in the public prosperity, ought to come in for a greater share in the expences of the State which takes care of his safety. Yet it is proper to assign him a less quota than the tenant, who sleeps without uneasiness about his mortgage. The people pensioned, paid, maintained by the State will have their pension, appointments, and pay, absolutely free. The contrary practice is an abuse, as it is taking from them with one hand what is given them with the other. The Financer who devised that resource was a true *Regrater*. Let infamy and civil death be the punishment of perjury, and let the declaration be made in writing. Let the payments be made
by

by the week, the month, the quarter, the half-year, or the year, according as the profession and situation render them less burthensome to the person taxed. Let the lowest class of people, those who have absolutely no other substance than their manual labour, be obliged only to pay the tenth of their gains. This, for instance, is a plan of the greatest simplicity, and which has no obstacles to the execution of it but from knavery, against which it is not impossible to make good provisions. The money will be collected clear and with ease, without violence and fraud, and without endangering the Royal authority. Resources will still remain open for times of distress and calamity. The States of *Holland* in this manner raised the two-hundredth penny; and they found it answer extremely well.

§. IV. " BEFORE projecting a total reform, which should annul the present management, the King should be enabled to clear the Farms, and to discharge the mortgages which he has made upon them. The Kings, in their loans, by the creation of ground-rents and annuities, by expedients of every kind, have appropriated such or such part of their present revenues, such or such office, such or such farm, for recourse, mortgage, and security to their creditors. How can this security

security and this mortgage be alienated, without diffusing a general distrust and uneasiness, without ruining the credit of the State for ever? The poll-tax cannot be given as a mortgage, till it be well established. The demesns offer no real security, considering the law which forbids alienation, and which urges redemption, considering experience which has shewn that the mortgagees are some times made accountable for the waste and overplus of the profits. The farm of the posts produces nothing considerable enough; and in the reform, the farm of tobacco is the first that would require being better adapted to the interest of the Kingdom and to the welfare of the people, to whom that plant is become, one may say, food. There are few taxes so detrimental to commerce as the duties on exportation; and the duties on importation will become less considerable in proportion as play is given to a greater number of neglected springs of interior administration.

“ The *French*, transported by their vivacity, praise or blame without exception and without reserve, according to the first impression which they receive. A brilliant success sanctifies in their eyes a foreign operation, a foreign method; and they will adopt it, without examining whether they have at home

N

the

the same principles which produced the success, whether that success was not accidental, and merely the favour of fortune. Thus they are passionately fond of the *Prussian* military discipline; and thus they ardently wish that the Court would copy the *British* Government, to which they give the honour of the opulence of which *England* has some outward appearances. They suffer themselves to be dazzled by these appearances; and without seeking to penetrate farther, they reproach their country for not resembling this neighbouring country. They pretend, that there is no other road to follow but that which the *English* have traced; and they explode all those measures of our Ministers, in which they discover no likeness to those of the Ministry of *Great Britain*. For my part, I know only one stroke of resemblance which it would have been advantageous for us to copy. Except the severity which made an useful example of the timid or ignorant *Byng*, I will tell you, with a frankness, for which I ask your pardon, that if any one of our Ministers should take it into his head to make us proceed in the brilliant career of credit as far as you are arrived in it after sixty years journey, I should vote for throwing him into the water, head foremost, as the greatest enemy

to the King and the nation. I leave you your prejudices, allow me mine,

“ I AM persuaded, that it is with debts just the reverse of arms. Victory feeds upon victory. But credit is wasted and destroyed by credit. Two battles successively gained strengthen the conqueror. Two successive loans shake the confidence of creditors in the debtor. Should he make a third, they are alarmed, and a fourth is a hint to them to be on their guard. He is much deceived, if he imagines that the fear of forcing him to a bankruptcy will give them an unbounded patience. That which they have is in proportion to their hope, and is only supported as that is. But the latter dies as soon as they perceive that their man draws near the end of his resources, and is at his last shifts. In hopes of saving some fragments of his wreck, they hasten it, as they could not wait for it without risking the loss of all.

“ *FRANCE* is still sensible of the half-year of system, during which she was the richest State in the universe. Her wealth was a being of agreement, and this agreement, which was not unanimous, being exposed to the fate of every agreement of mere caprice, her effects shared the discredit into which she fell. This wealth was a tumour,

a dropſy, which did not ſubſide without rendering the leanness, which it for ſome time concealed, more hideous. The national debt was augmented under *Lewis XIII* and *Lewis XIV*. Great things were done in thoſe two reigns. Some rich and populous provinces were united to the crown, *France* obtained ſome glorious victories, the King and the Kingdom were in the higheſt reputation. But we are only ſenſible of the debt which thoſe two Monarchs left us.

“ EVERY proportion between *France* and *Great Britain* allowed, our debt, with which we are ſo much burthened, is ſcarce the half of yours. But ſuch as it is, the State would not have had the honour of it, if the interior adminiſtration had been as intelligent and as active in *France*, for a hundred years paſt, as it has been in *England*. It is happy for us, that ſome Miniſters more brilliant than ſolid have not encouraged in all ranks of people the induſtry peculiar to each. If they had carried agriculture and internal commerce as far as they both may be carried, if they had made ſuch advantage of men and lands that their ſituation could not be improved, I ſhould have no dependence on the reſources which able politicians ſuppoſe we have; and far from hoping that time would re-eſtabliſh our affairs, I ſhould think that it would only
make

make his Majesty approach nearer and nearer to insolvency.

“ EXCEPTING our plantations of sugar and indigo, which certainly we shall not give up, all *America* and the factories in the *East Indies* are not worth, or ought not to be worth in our eyes, the share which we shall preserve in the cod-fishery, and that which we may enlarge in the herring-fishery. I wish that we may have nothing left us in *America* but our islands. The infancy in which agriculture and internal commerce still remain among us, is a sure pledge that we shall not be long incommoded by debts, oppressed by taxes. Our estates may double their value; it is more than is necessary to clear the State and to set the people at ease. As the sea, when most violently agitated in its waters, throws its largest and strongest waves on its shores; the more intercourse there shall be between our provinces, the more those which are on the sea-coast and on the frontier will increase their intercourse with foreigners. Internal commerce, when it is encouraged as much as it may be, has no reflux to make it turn back on itself. It carries to a distance its superfluities; and by other channels it brings a new substance and new nourishment to the body which it revives*.

[* Our *English* Nobility and Gentry, by their large
N 3

“THE clamour against the King’s Farms and Farmers is general. It is imagined, that their existence choaks even the bud of a happy revolution. For my part, forgetting that I am interested in seeing them in higher credit, I am of opinion that the Farmers-General may be, in the hands of his Majesty’s Ministers, the best instruments of the public welfare. Who, like them, are in a situation to form and support expensive undertakings, to carry on tedious works with spirit, to restore to the King the liberty of disposing of some parts of his revenues which are so many blisters on the backs of his subjects?

“FIFTY Offices†, of which too much ill cannot be said, keep on the rack, and, as it were, strangle the intercourse of one province with another. They prevent the industry of

large subscriptions, and our Legislature, by their ready concurrence in extending our inland commerce by new bridges, canals, &c. seem of late years to have viewed this important subject in its true light, and to have paid a becoming attention to these and other unanswerable arguments in its favour. The Empire of China and the Republic of Holland are (among others) striking instances of the great utility of these inland communications.]

† It is sufficient to observe those which are along the *Rhône*, from *Lyons* to *Beaucaire*, and by land from *Marseilles* to *Lyons*. There are enough to discourage the most ardent man, and to tire the most patient. The same is nearly the case from *Paris* to *Nantes*, from *Paris* to *Rouen*, &c.

the

the *Dauphinese* from making an exchange with that of the *Burgundians* and *Provençals*, &c. they even stifle in the birth the industry of the people of different provinces. The suppression of all the Offices of this kind is an essential preliminary to the welfare of *France*. But perhaps the Court may have mortgaged their produce for a long term of years. Perhaps there may be many of them which have been given in perpetuity to Peers or Commoners. Here the Farmers-General may display themselves to the people in the light of patriotism, to which they are generally supposed to be utter strangers. I am certain, that they will not refuse to furnish the sums necessary to redeem those Offices and Custom-houses from the hands of their mortgagees; and that they will chearfully receive on other Farms the transfer of debts placed to their account. By means of the advantages which the Court may give them in the internal commerce, they will easily be induced to undertake at their own expence the public works, capable of giving it a new life. The navigation of rivers rendered more safe, more easy, and less chargeable, the distribution of various canals to join, enlarge, or drain them, the assignment of mines neglected through fear of the first expences, the searching for those of coals,

which the excessive consumption of wood will soon make one of the chief necessities of life: these are objects for which patriots will always continue to entertain barren wishes, if a powerful Company, such as that of the King's Farmers, does not attend to them. Instead of irritating them by the clamours of hatred and envy, it would be better to excite their ambition, to flatter their vanity, by shewing them how they may entitle themselves to the public gratitude. What but respect do they seek in that luxury and ostentation which are less for themselves than for the people, whom they think to dazzle by them? If they are sure of finding this respect by a better use of their substance, is there a doubt but that they will eagerly resolve upon it?

“ I SEE this new way of thinking give, in ten years, a new face to the Kingdom. It will have no more fertile countries with poor inhabitants, no more poor countries with miserable inhabitants. All *France* will be no more than one Province, of which all the extremities will have a lasting communication with the centre. The *Rhône*, the *Saone*, and the *Loire*, the *Moselle*, the *Meuse*, and the *Marne*, the *Lys*, and the *Scheld*, the *Oyse*, and the *Somme*, brought near, as one may say, to the *Seine*, will make the riches
and

and industry of each Province common to them all. Their conveniences will no longer be rated by their distance from the Capital. Arts and trades will profitably employ the people whom the unfruitfulness of their lands disheartens from tilling them. The barrenest places will be peopled, as some mountains of *Switzerland* are, with labourers and artisans of every kind. The inhabitants of the *Cevennes*, the *Dauphinese*, the *Limousins*, the *Provençals* will compensate by their industry for the ingratitude of their soil; the *Languedocians*, the *Gascons*, and the *Normans*, in constant correspondence with them, will be no longer embarrassed with the too plentiful productions of theirs. We shall be cured of our madness of placing manufactures in large towns, where the dearth of labour always makes the manufacturer's circumstances mean and his trade languid.

“ To restore the honour of agriculture, it is not necessary to force into it by edicts the vocation of those who are born in the country, as the King of *Sardinia* has done†. We should, on the contrary, take the utmost care not to annex to that profession,

† His *Sardinian* Majesty, in 1760, published an edict forbidding country-people to quit the condition of their ancestors, and to come and settle in towns, without the express leave of the Court.

the most innocent and the most noble, any mark of slavery. The state of peasantry will be prized by those who are born to it, as soon as it ceases to be a state of mean-ness and indigence. Let some sanction, which shall fix the ranks, give one to the labourer between the burgher and the tradesman; let it place domestics and livery-servants in the lowest stage of the nation: the taste for agriculture will then revive in all its deserters; and an agreeable ease, which will be the fruit of its labours, will secure it from every attack in succeeding generations",

I cut short some fresh fallies of the imagination of the Financer and his friends, by telling them, that we *English* were more sensibly affected by the present than by the future; that our hopes in this war were founded on the exhausted state in which we knew that the Kingdom was at present; that the effort of the Ministry for the re-establishment of the Marine resembled a convulsion; that it was doubted at *London* whether *France* could raise the next year's supplies for the army in *Germany*. In short, I talked as they think at *Westminster*. I was repulsed with great vigour. But I went so far as to specify facts.

“THE

“THE *German* war, *said he*, has carried about three hundred millions out of the Kingdom, where there remains nearly four times as much. The greatest part of this money, which is in private hands, was withdrawn from circulation, when the indiscreet zeal of *M. Silhouette* sunk the credit of the royal bills. Hence that appearance of weakness which you believe. But it will vanish as soon as confidence is restored. It is true, that the disgraces which our arms have suffered have ruined a great many private fortunes, have annihilated our foreign trade. But what is the result of this, except that we have need of peace? The King wishes it sincerely; our Ministers negotiate it in earnest; it is certain, if you do not form exorbitant pretensions. Think not, however, that we shall accept any conditions. One part is left us to act, which is bravely to employ our whole substance to recover what we have lost, or to disable you from rejoicing at the mischief which you have done us. This part is acted with a good grace. We are still far from that state of distress in which our fathers were in 1709, and your ambition may procure us new allies. The people and the Court lay aside those false ideas of military glory, for the prejudice of which *France* paid so dearly

dearly in the last reign. But we adhere more than ever to true honour, and if your obstinacy should oblige us to continue the war, the funds will be found for armaments by sea and land.

“YOUR Ministers make, with a boldness which has no example, loans of two hundred and fifty millions all at once. When they publish a list of the subscriptions complete, and the payments made at the bank at the time appointed, they think they give an incontestable proof of the immensity of their resources. You must allow, that none but simpletons can be deluded by such a bubble. All those subscribers for a loan of twelve or fifteen millions sterling bring neither gold nor silver to the bank. They offer only paper, which must be received with the utmost silence. They exchange old securities for new securities; and the Government inculcating the notion that it has received twelve or fifteen millions sterling, has done nothing more than added some new paper for that sum to the paper already known. Your Ministers have all those notes to re-alise, both at home and abroad; and they are almost as much embarrassed as if they had not found new creditors. There have now been three succeeding years in which your annual expence was nineteen millions sterling.

ling. The whole that is raised in the three Kingdoms and the Colonies does not make a total of seven; and that of the gold and silver which you have in circulation is no more than seventeen or eighteen. Judge yourself which of the two nations will sink first, if they should game in earnest till one be ruined.

“ If the King of *France* should proclaim a loan of two hundred and fifty millions of livres, he would throw all the Orders of the State into consternation; and certainly his Majesty would have great difficulty to find such a prodigious subsidy. Yet the proportion of *France* to *Great Britain* is at least, and in every respect, at present two to one. But if the State should be in want of that sum, M. de *Montmartel* alone will procure it her. The rich individuals whose confidence he possesses, will not know of his engagements with the Court any farther than may relate to those which he will offer to them, and into which he would have them enter. Dispersed in different funds, on different mortgages, the sum total will only be known to himself and those who are necessarily in the secret. Every new creditor placed on his mortgage, where he sees his security, will again be a resource in farther necessities; and the State will find herself supplied,

plied, without an alarm being spread in the minds of the people by the largeness of the supply. A rich landholder obtains more easily, and on less burthenome conditions, twenty thousand crowns by borrowing on each of his twenty lordships, than two hundred thousand crowns on all together; and his credit, which the latter operation would sink, will not be affected by the former.

“IT is pretty much the same with our taxes. Their objects being multiplied, they divide the attention, and render the burthen more sensibly felt, at the same time that it is, more generally shared. Besides, these taxes being laid successively, they appear suggested and required by some circumstances which have only a momentary existence; and they are borne in the hope of their suppression, as soon as circumstances shall become more favourable. With you, on the contrary, taxes are laid with all the severity of arbitrary power. Your Parliament, much less certain than a King of *France* of the tractableness of the people, disdains to enter into argument and explanation with them. It signifies to them its resolutions in an absolute tone; it increases their burthen by the roughness with which it lays it on their shoulders. In the first year

year of the war, it passed the land-tax bill; and without hesitation it extended it to four shillings in the pound sterling; which amounts to a fifth; and the Catholic pays double. What has been the consequence of this indiscreet imposition? Your Government imagined, that, after this, you might be made to receive others; and formed some projects which exceeded your natural strength. But the *English* people, having continually before their eyes the immense produce of the land-tax, have opposed other levies of money which would have been made by taxes; and your Ministry have had no other resource than that of loans; this is what our *Rabelais* calls *eating one's corn green*. With this, how fare you, Gentlemen, victorious and triumphant as you are? Your national debt is increased to such a degree, that all which is actually raised on the people of the three Kingdoms will not be sufficient, after the peace, for the current expences of the State: the calculation is short, and the account very clear. The debt is at present, by your own confession, a hundred and thirty millions sterling. It would be no lie if we were to add to it a secret article of eight or ten. But no chicanery. The annual interest of this enormous capital, at three
per

per cent. only, is four millions. You must set apart eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, charged on the customs, and secured by Parliament, for the maintenance of the King. With two millions, or two millions and a half, will you support all the expences of the State? Do you imagine, that your conquests, before they are of any account, will not require of you some advances to make them valuable, and some immunities to people them? You will not only be obliged to continue on your people, after the peace, all the burthens which you have made them bear during the war, but you will proceed to lay but new ones upon them; while we, who have played unfortunately, and lost the game, may take breath.

“MAY Heaven preserve equally the two crowns from a desire of contending together for many years to come! But if matters should a second time be imbroiled, the betts will not be in your favour. You will tell me some news, after the peace, of the *Dutch* and *Hamburgh* Companies, whom the temptation of change has induced to substitute your papers for the gold and silver in their coffers; you will tell yourselves whether, in a like case, you can again depend upon them. On our side, we were

were neither prepared to make war upon you nor to hate you, and it was not the time after the rupture to attack you on your weak side. We had some Ministers who were without experience, without views, and without taste for works of calculation, and who lost the true use of the credit which the King had in *Holland* at the beginning of the war. They borrowed money for military operations, while, to ruin you, the operations of stock-jobbing alone were sufficient. In a word, we were wrong in not going to war with the idea that we were to fight for our existence. Another time we shall not be mistaken; and you will not see us employed about flat-bottomed boats, piquing ourselves on our patience under the title of generosity."

I HOPE, my Lord, that you will allow me to go halves with your Lordship in making objections and replies to the Financier, all whose arguments are nothing short of demonstrations.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

TO THE EARL OF S. ON MINISTERS AND
SECRETARIES OF STATE.

State of the Government before and under Lewis XI. Who was Prime Minister under Lewis XII. Who were the Ministers of Francis I. How the Secretaries of State rose under Henry II. What they were under the sons of that Monarch and under Henry IV. How they sunk under the Regency of Mary de Medicis. Why Cardinal de Richelieu kept them in an extreme dependence. Reflections on that Minister. Particulars of Cardinal Mazarin. Stricture very remarkable and little remarked of the genius and prudence of the Secretaries of State whom he found in place. Extract from the Political History of the Age.

MY LORD,

THE idea, which you wish to give the young Lord your son, of the Ministry of France, requires, as an introduction, that kind of historical Almanack, or Calendar†,

† [*Anglice*, A red book.]

which

which I add to my letter, for all the various present departments of Government. I had it from a man who has opportunities of seeing and knowing most of the Offices. This, strictly speaking, would answer your purpose, if my Lord went back no farther than the beginning of the present reign. But as your Lordship has given him a general aera for all his studies, I will conform to it. Easy as it would be for me to have numerous anecdotes on former reigns, I shall have great difficulty to supply you with many on this. Satire has not among the *French* the same licentiousness as with us; and if men in place are not always alike esteemed, they are always alike feared. We dwell on every small particular which belong to them while they are in favour, and when they cease to be so, we lose sight of them. What has been observed of them is perplexed by being made public: tradition is equally faithless and confused; it is proper to estrange from such a source a young Lord who is induced to study history by a more noble impulse than that of curiosity.

UNDER the race of the *Capets*, which has filled the throne of *France* for eight hundred years in direct succession from male to male*,

* [*Hugh Capet*, Count of *Paris* and *Orleans*, &c. was chosen

the Monarchy did not assume, till under *Lewis XI*, the stability which it has now. That Prince taught his successors not to divide the demesns of the Crown, to reckon the paying of homage as nothing, and to prize the re-union of old dismemberings more than conquests. He chose rather to cement that of the Dutchy of *Burgundy*, than to attempt the acquisition of the Seventeen Provinces, by the marriage of his son, who was *Charles VIII*, with the heiress of *Charles the Hardy*: and, I think, he acted very wisely. Perhaps *Mary of Burgundy* might have been the relict of *Charles*, and have had it in her power to confer on a second husband the whole succession of her father. The first husband perhaps might have made her the mother of one or more daughters, who might have claimed all their mother's dowry. In short, an acquisition to me seems valuable in proportion as it is solid; and this cannot be said of a dowry, which, being subject to a reversion, remains with the strongest of the claimants, who are often very numerous.

Of the possessors of grand fiefs there only remained the houses of *Albret*, *Armagnac*, and

chosen King by the General-States, *A. D.* 988; and began the third, or *Capetian*, race of the Kings of *France*, which is still on the throne.]

Foir.

Foix. *Lewis XI* humbled the two last, and suffered no uneasiness from the first, through the need which he had of it against the Kings of *Castile* who envied him *Navarre*. Our Kings had lost or ceded the vast possessions which blood, alliances, and arms had given them in the Kingdom of *France*: *Calais* only, with its small territory, remained to them. *Lewis XI* therefore was the first *Capetian* King who added the reality of Monarchical Sovereignty to the titles and honours of Royalty, with which some fierce and powerful vassals had forced his predecessors to be contented. This Prince, of whom the *French* have a separate History which they esteem †, would have neither Council nor Ministers. *Machiavel* might have taken him for his hero. He was deceitful, revengeful, cruel, and hypocritical. He was hated by all who were of a rank to approach him; but he was loved by the people, and he deserved it. He had no mercy towards oppressors; and he delivered the inhabitants of the country from the robberies of his soldiers, by assigning them a regular pay. He would suffer no one but himself to have power in his Kingdom, and he would have it without

† [Written by *M. du Clos*.]

bounds: he was truly despotic. It was of his poney that *Brézé*, Senechal of *Normandy*, said, that "there was not so strong a horse in the world, for he carried the King and his whole Council." As if he was desirous of familiarising the *French* all at once to absolute power, he insisted on his will being regarded even when he was delirious. He was one day held back by his domestics, when, in the paroxysm of a violent fever, he was going to throw himself out of the window; and as soon as he came to himself, he punished them severely for their zeal, saying, that "no one ought to be so bold as to hinder a King of *France* from doing what he pleased."

CHARLES VIII, his son and successor, is scarce known but by his prodigious enterprise on *Italy*, and by his marriage with the heiress of *Bretagne*. As the Dutchy was only a a mesne-fief of the Crown held immediately of the Dukes of *Normandy*, it passed to the females; and *Maximilian* of *Austria*, the widower of the heiress of *Burgundy*, was going to run away with this other heiress, to whom he was contracted, when the Regent of *France*, *Anne* of *Beaujeu*, demanded her for her brother, according to the intentions of *Lewis XI* their father.

LEWIS

LEWIS XII, the successor of *Charles*, acted like a politician as much as a lover, by espousing the widow of his predecessor. The eldest of the two daughters whom he had by her was married to the Count of *Angoulême*, afterwards *Francis I*; this secured the union of *Bretagne* to the Crown. *Lewis XII* is quoted as one of the good Kings that have existed. Three years rigorous imprisonment, besides the various trials which *Lewis XI* had made him suffer, had greatly contributed to fortify his heart. Adversity is the best school of Princes destined for the throne. He was an honest man and a bad politician. He diminished the taxes and imposts laid by his predecessor. *Never, say the contemporary historians, were there such good times as in the time of good King Lewis XII.* Nevertheless, it was he who gave the first example * of the

* [Sir *Robert Talbot*, I believe, is mistaken. The venality of offices began in the reign of *Francis I*. *Lewis* took away from Chapters the election of Bishops, and claimed the nomination as well as the investiture. This is all the innovation he made, according to good historians. [In the beginning of his reign, *Lewis XII* sold some offices, but none that were judicial, and merely with a view to avoid loading his people with taxes. And as soon as it was in his power, he repurchased and suppressed these offices, and rather than have recourse to this expedient again, alienated some of his demesns.]

venality of employments, and who furnished the first leaven of that enormous mass of debts, whose increase would have been incredible, if *England* had not produced one still more monstrous. But it is not when it is first imposed, that such a burthen is felt; and *Lewis XII* was proclaimed, even in his life-time, *the father of his people*. In fact, he loved his subjects as a father loves his children. He had a Prime Minister who was his friend and almost his companion. The gentlemen of that time were noble by name, by arms, and by descent. The Kings, keeping themselves at a less distance than at present, might display their social virtues as well as their Royal talents. This Minister was Cardinal *d' Amboise*, to whom history would have given the purest encomiums, if he had not been ambitious of being Pope. This fancy made him sometimes forget that he was a *Frenchman*, and what he owed to the King and the nation. But he returned entirely to his first duties, and by his application to the interior administration he deserves to be pardoned for having some time lost sight of them. The happiness of the people in a Monarchical State well governed does not depend on the successes of war and on foreign politics. Such a State always makes an advantage of disgraces, when the Prince, whose ambition

bition they disconcert, has not entirely set himself above the laws. The exhausted state of his coffers, and the discouragement of his military men, necessarily make him consider the affection of his subjects as the only solid support of his grandeur, and their welfare as the only true symbol of his power. Convinced that these alone can restore to him his wealth and his reputation, he makes them his principal objects. Every thing inclines me to think that *Lewis XIV.*, after the peace of *Utrecht*, would have governed on new principles, if he could have flattered himself with living long enough to enjoy the reform. Cardinal *d'Amboise* died before his master, who did not supply his place; and this was a misfortune to *France*: for if *Francis I.*, at his coming to the throne, had found a Prime Minister established, this young Prince, abandoned to his pleasures and to warlike ambition, would have devolved on him the care of the administration, and while his courage hurried him to the head of his armies, his people would not have been abandoned to the government of his mother †, a Princess who had many of the faults of her sex, and very few of its virtues. It may be said, that *France* was then governed by divine providence.

† [*Louisa of Savoy, Dutches of Angoulême.*]

THE Secretaries of State, who at present are Ministers, were then only Clerks to the Chancellor, reckoned Minister of State by birth. The assistants of the Chancellor, who were all of equal rank, disputed with him who should be most subservient to the passions of the mother and the son. During the greatest part of his reign, *Francis* reposed his confidence in his mother and some favourites of the same age with himself. His arms sustained some terrible misfortunes, from which the State recovered, as one may say, of itself, and by the strength of its constitution, by which all its nobles were then so many soldiers. *France*, which is generally reckoned more powerful now than she was at that time, is much less so as to the defensive. The perplexities of *Lewis XIV.*, during the siege of *Landrecy* *, prove that she could not support similar crises. *Francis* was be-

* [By Prince *Eugene*, in 1712. "*France*," says *Voltaire*, "exhausted of men and money, was in the utmost consternation. Several considerable detachments of the enemy had already ravaged part of *Champagne*, and advanced as far as the gates of *Rheims*. The alarm was as great at *Versailles* as in the rest of the Kingdom. It was even debated in Council whether the King should not retire to *Chambord*." But Lord *Albemarle's* entrenchments at *Denain* being forced by Marshal *Villars*, the siege of *Landrecy* was raised, and *Douay*, *Quesnoy*, and *Bouchain* retaken.]

loved by his Nobility, and he deserved it, possessing, as he did, in the highest degree the talents and virtues which then characterised distinguished persons of that rank. His rival, *Charles V.* had not the same delicacy in point of honour and punctilio. Always ready to eke out the skin of the lion with that of the fox, he easily entangled in the snares of his fraudulent policy a Prince who piqued himself on frankness, courage, and generosity, in all things, and who transacted business like a Knight of the Round Table.

IN his seven or eight last years, *Francis* saw the necessity of having confidential Ministers. He detached himself from his favourites, and substituted in their place two men who were recommended to him only by their capacity. These were Cardinal *de Tournon* and Admiral *d'Annebaut*. Though the *Romish* pretensions of the former might well authorise him in some chicaneries on rank and honours, they did not seem to give him any misunderstanding with his colleague, who enjoyed the same favour, the same degree of authority, and an equal influence in affairs. The other Ministers kept at so great a distance from these two principals, that they may be said to have served under them.

THOSE seven or eight years of good administration healed the wounds of thirty years. *Francis*, before he died, recommended his two Ministers to his son and successor, *Henry II.* He advised him to let the Constable *de Montmorenci*, (whom age and experience had not endowed with talents necessary for government) grow old in peace in his house of *Chantilly*, or at least to keep him at a distance from business. But he had no sooner closed his eyes than *Henry* placed the Constable near his person, and set him at the head of his councils and his armies. Zealous as a Catholic, very ignorant as a Christian, cruel and haughty as a Minister, unskilful as a General, he is known only by his faults and his long life. Under his Ministry *France* was plundered, the people were crushed when they ventured to utter their complaints, and the *French* armies were defeated when he commanded them. It was he who lost the famous battle of *St. Quintin*, at which time *Philip II* made a vow of building the † *Escorial*. The Constable, who was there taken prisoner, sacrificed every thing to his impa-

† A prodigious edifice twelve or fifteen leagues from *Madrid*. It unites to a vast palace a monastery, where live three hundred monks. "So great a vow is a proof of great fear," said a *Frenchman* to one who boasted the magnificence of the *Escorial*.

tience of returning to Court, where he feared being supplanted in favour by the Duke of *Guise*. He negotiated and made *Henry* agree to the shameful treaty of *Cbateau-Cambresis*, which redeemed two poultry towns * and the prisoners by the cession of two hundred and forty strong places †. It was at this treaty that Secretaries of State were first known. *L'Aubepine*, who signed there, took that title instead of that of Secretary of the Finances, which till then had been the only one annexed to that office. He was imitated by his colleagues, who have made it a rule for their successors. The office received again another great alteration to its advantage by administering the oath, which ceased to be taken before the Chancellor, and from that time was to be taken before the King. The dignity of Chancellor was also augmented by the custody of the seals which *Henry* gave him in right of his office. This Prince was mortally wounded [in 1559] by the splinter of a lance at a tournament, which he gave

* [Three, viz. *Hames*, *Catalet*, and *St. Quintin*.]

† ["One hundred and ninety-eight," says the *Universal Modern History*. "The true equivalent for all these places was the preserving *Calais* and its dependencies, and the three imperial cities of *Metz*, *Toul*, and *Verdun*, which were of much more consequence to France than all that she relinquished."

Univ. Mod. Hist. Vol. IX. p. 248.]

for the double nuptials of his sister with the Duke of *Savoy*, and of his daughter with the King of *Spain*, stipulated in the treaty of peace. He was succeeded by his eldest son *Francis II*, who had married the young Queen of *Scotland*, *Mary Stuart*, niece to the Duke of *Guise* by her mother's side. By means of this affinity with the King, the Duke of *Guise*, superior in every thing to the Constable, seized the helm of Government. He was more than Prime Minister. In spite of the Princes of the blood, he made himself be entitled by the young Monarch his Lieutenant-General in the Kingdom. This was making himself equal to the ancient † Mayors of the palace. He had before been invested with that high title by *Henry II* in 1558, when he was appointed to the command of the army with which he took *Calais*

† [The Mayor of the palace was an officer of great dignity and power in the first, or *Merovingian*, race of Kings. He was originally chosen by the Nobility, and confirmed by the Sovereign, and was entrusted with the management of all affairs of state. The power of the Mayors become in time almost absolute, for by reason of the weakness and supineness of the Kings, they increased it as they pleased, so that at last it became hereditary. *Pepin*, and his son *Charles*, surnamed *Martel*, successively Mayors of the palace, were in a manner Kings themselves.]

from us, and reanimated the people terrified by the loss of the battle of *St. Quintin*.

CHARLES IX, yet a minor, [in 1560] succeeded his brother, who reigned scarce seventeen months. The famous *Catherine de Medicis* availed herself of the *Guises* and the Constable, to hinder the Regency being allotted to *Anthony of Bourbon*, first Prince of the blood, and King of *Navarre*, by *Jane d' Albret*, mother of *Henry IV*. This whole minority was a time of trouble and confusion. The King of *Navarre* had the title of Lieutenant-General; *Catherine* assumed the administration without being styled Regent. Soon after his majority, *Charles* chose to govern by himself. It was in his reign that the Secretaries of State became Ministers. This Prince was extremely violent in his passions. Once when he was engaged in a party at tennis, the Secretary of State, *Villeroy*, came to offer him a dispatch to sign. Till then the Kings of *France* had signed them all with their own hand. *Charles*, who would not interrupt his game, cried out, "Sign for me, my father." *Villeroy* did not make him repeat it. "Very well, my master," *he replied*, "I will sign since you will have me;" and withdrew, taking with him the dispatch, which he issued after having signed it. This sentence alone made a title to which

possession has given the force of law. This is a revolution, of which few historians have deigned to speak; and it is, in my opinion, one of the most remarkable in the interior administration. No honourable mention is made, in those two reigns, but of one Minister, the Chancellor *de l'Hopital*, who ventured frequently by evasions to oppose the will of *Catherine de Medicis*, and to thwart the ambition of the *Guises*.

HENRY III, [who succeeded his brother in 1573] given up to some favourites without merit and capacity, governed by his mother, domineered over by the *Guises*, had neither understanding enough to chuse good Ministers, nor firmness enough to support them after having chosen them. The Secretaries of State performed the functions of Ministers, they stooped to all the Grandees whom they thought able to keep them in place, or to remove them. They were, in general, men of exquisite judgment, who applied themselves to business in the midst of a corrupted Court. The difficulty of supporting the Royal authority, of supporting themselves, under a Prince who did not atone for his faults by any great talent, sharpened the subtlety of their wit, and accustomed them to secure, as it were, a provision of resources and expedients against every possibility.

bility. When *Henry IV* came to the throne, [in 1588,] he forgot that they had been attached to his enemies, that they even then had connections with them. This great Prince had reason to hope, that those able politicians would pay homage to his powerful genius, and would be subdued by his generosity; that they would stake their glory and their fortune for the good of his service, and that the petty interests, which had made their patriotism doubtful, would give way to the fear of being penetrated, punished, and despised by a master, whom his paternal views should have rendered equally dear and respectable to all the Orders of the Kingdom. * *Villeroy* and his colleagues had the same regard as the Ministers at Court and in Council; whatever the Duke of *Sully*, who is sometimes out of humour with them, says in his Memoirs.

* ["A man of great parts, unassisted with learning; an able Negotiator, and a consummate Minister; difficult in making promises, but punctual in performing them; born to a good fortune, to which in his long service he did not add above two hundred pounds a year. He died in 1616, after having executed the office of Secretary of State, with some interruptions, upwards of fifty years." *Universal Modern History*, Vol. IX. p. 358.]

THESE Statesmen were no more than intriguers and flatterers, when-[in 1608] they had lost the Monarch who knew how to distinguish and favour merit. Their mean complaisance for the *Florentine* † *Concini*, and after his tragical death, for the Constable *de Luynes*, who had the boldness, at the age of twenty-two, to place himself at the head of the councils and armies of *France*, reduced the Secretaries of State to their former inferiority. They were considered as no more than subalterns devoted to the Ministers, and as Courtiers whose fortune depended on theirs. Cardinal *de Richelieu*, just nominated to the Bishoprick of *Luçon*, was made Secretary of State,* by the patronage of *Barbin*, Steward of the household to Queen *Mary de Medicis*, and by the interest of *Concini*. When he became Prime Minister, he took no care to raise his former colleagues from their state of humiliation. Not satisfied with confer-

† [The famous Marshal *d'Ancre*, the favourite of the Queen-mother *Mary de Medicis*, arrested and slain in the *Louvre*, April 24, 1616, by the influence of *Luynes*, and by the order of *Lewis XIII*, thence surnamed the *Just*.]

* [“In the room of *Mangot* (made Keeper of the Seals) the successor of *Villeroy*. *Barbin* was at the same time, made Comptroller-General of the Finances.” *Memoires de Bassompierre. Histoire de mere et du fils*.]

ring those offices on his most confidential creatures, he kept them constantly in a dependence very different from that in which the head of an office keeps his clerks. This wonderful man engrossed to himself the whole regal authority. The President *Henault* has judged of him with no less equity than discernment. He brought *France* back to the time of the ancient Mayors of the palace*; and in less than twelve years, he inured it to that new yoke. I am inclined to think, that a powerful private interest inflamed his zeal for the purely monarchical constitution. He had great views and an immoderate affection for his † niece, more

* [The Cardinal had that appellation invidiously given him by *Gaston* Duke of *Orleans*, when that Prince withdrew to *Nantz* in 1628. See *Univ. Mod. Hist.* Vol. ix. p. 38.]

† [*Magdalen de Vignerot*, *Madam de Combalet*, in whose favour *Lewis XIII* erected *Aiguillon* into a Dutchy and Peerage, in 1638, with this singular clause, to be enjoyed by her, her heirs and successors, as well males and females, in such manner as she should be pleased to appoint. In virtue of which, by her will, in 1674, she called to the succession her neice, and at the same time substituted her grand-nephew *Lewis* Marquess of *Richelieu*, whose son the Count d'*Aginois*, (now Prime Minister of *France*,) was, by an arrêt of Parliament in 1731, declared Duke and Peer of *France*, in virtue of this substitution; but the Peerage is esteemed no older than this arrêt.]

known

known by the name of the Dutchess of *Aiguillon* than by any other. As long as he could reckon on her being married to the Count *de Soissons*, Prince of the blood, then to *Gaston Monsieur*, brother to *Lewis XIII*, I think I see in him a tutor who makes the good of his pupils his only object. When he had lost all hopes and views on this side, he was seized with affection for his plan, he was animated by his knowledge of the ease of continuing to execute it; and at length he made a point of honour of bringing it to a period. I make no doubt, that, if in the five or six last years of his life he had transferred to some nephew the passion which he had for his niece, the royal family would have found in him a second *Pepin*†. It appears by the best *Memoirs* of that time, that he flattered himself with surviving *Lewis XIII*, and that he had made that Prince sign a will which gave him the Regency. It appears by others, that by desiring to marry his niece to the Count *de Soissons*, when there were no hopes of the King's being a father, he projected bringing that Prince near the throne by the most audacious of all in-

† [See p. 294 note.

trigues, forcing *Gaston* to celibacy, and contesting with the Princes of *Condé* their civil state. It is really pleasing to trace this powerful genius in his brilliant career. This great man suffers some eclipses, but he afterwards emerges. I think *Richelieu* greater, bolder, than our *Cromwell*, without his meanness or base hypocrisy. I am fond of representing to myself these two ambitious men struggling with each other, when they were masters of their nation: the *Frenchman* to me seems certain of crushing his adversary. The history of this famous Cardinal would require the pen of a *Tacitus*: as yet it has only had that of an indifferent lawyer and a fanatic *Huguenot*. † *Auberi* is an ignorant flatterer; * *le Vassor* is an unjust satirist.

CARDINAL *Mazarin* was the successor of *Richelieu*. Being a foreigner, his ideas of the genius, manners, and government of the *French* were very confined. To conceal from the people and the Court his

† [He wrote the lives both of *Richelieu* and *Mazarin*, "which," *Voltaire* says, "though indifferent productions afford some instruction." He died in 1695.]

* [This writer, who was a refugee in *England*, was of the Oratory. *Voltaire* styles his History of *Lewis XIII* "diffuse, heavy, and sarcastic," but adds, that "it abounds " with singular facts." He died in 1718:]
ignorance

ignorance as to interior affairs, he wanted the assistance and instruction of those who had laboured under his predecessor. It is equally surprising that they should give him their assistance, and that they knew not how to avail themselves of it, in order to govern him. In this perhaps, more than in any thing else, the artful *Italian* displayed his genius and address. The Princes and Grandees, deceived by the appearances of an inexhaustible courtesy and complaisance, were delighted with believing that he would be their representative at the head of affairs, and that by employing the royal authority at their pleasure, they should make him their screen against the public hatred. Their example determined the courtiers of the lower rank, and the whole Court applauded the choice of the Queen-Regent. *Servien, Chavigny, Lionne, and le Tellier*, who might have reduced him to the necessity of acknowledging his own incapacity and of resigning the Prime Ministry, if they had agreed to do nothing but obey him, suffered themselves to be ensnared by the vanity of passing for his preceptors and guides. They confided in the promises which he made them of an unbounded gratitude. Cajoled by being treated by him like companions, they did not perceive

ceive that they gave themselves a master, till he was able to do without them. It was then no longer the time to make difficulties: they who wished to remain in place saw themselves obliged to merit the good graces of the avaricious and ungrateful *Italian* by an attachment without reserve. Their slavery did not end but with their lives.

HERE, my Lord, begins a new administration. The reign of *Lewis XIV*, [which commenced in 1643] was the reign of the Secretaries of State. Combined against M. *Fouquet*, who seemed ambitious of succeeding Cardinal *Mazarin*, they accomplished his destruction†. Having in their hands a young King, who had great abilities though little acquired knowledge, they easily gave him a relish for the noble ambition of governing by himself. I cannot better explain to you this revolution than by quoting that part of the *Political History of the Age* in which it is described. It is at page 292. edition of 1757, in *quarto*. After having related the disgrace of the Super-intendant, the Historian proceeds as follows:

“ This court-intrigue was the principal
“ cause of the despotism with which *Lewis*
“ governed, the source of the great things,

† [See Letter XIX,

which

“ which were done in his reign, and of
“ the enormous faults which his Ministers
“ made him commit. *Le Tellier* and *Colbert*
“ alone remaining in favour with *Lewis*
“ had no recommendation to the kingdom
“ but the choice of the King: they made
“ that the only plea for the obedience which
“ they required; and in order to make the
“ *Grandeess* and the people submissive to
“ their will, which they pretended to be
“ that of the Sovereign, they carried the re-
“ gal authority as high as they possibly
“ could. The resolutions of the Council
“ were presented to the Parliaments as ar-
“ rêts without appeal: the good pleasure of
“ the King was given as the supreme law of
“ *France*. The Ministers uniting that the
“ first place might not be filled, concurred
“ in inspiring the young Monarch with a
“ high idea of his abilities, and a great
“ confidence in his strength. Having di-
“ vided among them all the branches of
“ Government, they placed in the chief
“ employments men raised like themselves
“ by application, and formed by experi-
“ ence; and they established themselves
“ in favour by giving the young King
“ the honour of those resolutions to which
“ they artfully knew how to bring him.
“ Jealousy prevailing among them, they
“ persisted

“ persisted in opposing to the ill offices
 “ which they mutually did each other such
 “ projects relative to their department as
 “ were most likely to please a young Prince
 “ who loved glory without being well
 “ acquainted with it, and who did not ap-
 “ prehend the difference between a reign of
 “ glory and a reign of bluster.

“ EMULATION made † *Colbert* an incom-
 “ parable Minister of the Finances. As it
 “ found no such good materials either in old
 “ *le Tellier* or in young *Louvois*, it only
 “ made them indefatigable Ministers of War.
 “ But to give some splendor to the reign of
 “ their master, all that was necessary was
 “ that it should urge them to that which
 “ would render their department consider-
 “ able. The increase of commerce, the en-
 “ couragement of arts, parade, magnificence,
 “ and taste could not but be the consequence
 “ of the trust which the King reposed in
 “ *Colbert*. *Le Tellier* and *Louvois* could not

† [“ *Colbert*, made Comptroller-General of the Fi-
 nances, was bred to business under *Mazarin*, and
 formed by nature for the very office to which he
 was promoted. *Le Tellier* held the post of Secretary
 of State for domestic affairs, and *Louvois* that for
 foreign; all were unconnected with each other, and sub-
 ject to no controul but the Sovereigns.” *Universal*
Mod. Hist. Vol. IX. p. 400.]

“ fail

“ fail to inspire him with the ambition of
“ conquests. *Lionne* should have regulated
“ the impressions which the King received
“ from his three colleagues. He was ac-
“ quainted with foreign affairs, with the
“ strength and interests of the several pow-
“ ers; and by shewing the King the danger
“ of making all *Europe* his enemies, he might
“ have been persuaded to abate of that pride
“ and haughtiness which made him at length
“ lose the fruit of his policy, which they al-
“ ways impaired. But *Lionne* could not
“ singly resist the torrent, and more able
“ as a Courtier than faithful and patri-
“ tic as a Minister, he confirmed by com-
“ plaissance a fault, which he could not
“ have condemned without hazarding the
“ King’s favour.”

THIS fragment, my Lord, is, I think, the best transition to my next letter, in which I will give your Lordship what I recollect on the rest of the subject.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

CONCLUSION OF THE FOREGOING.

That it would have been advantageous to France if Lewis XIV had been supplied with a Prime Minister. Inconveniences which a Prince avoids by the judicious choice of such a confident. Both these positions proved by facts. Idea of a Prime Minister. Project relating to that employment ascribed to Philip Duke of Orleans, Regent of France. Portrait of ordinary men in the Ministry. Idea of their Offices. Particulars of M. Chauvelin, Keeper of the Seals, of Messrs. d'Argenson, and Cardinal de Bernis.

MY LORD,

IT would have been a misfortune to *France* if *Mazarin* had been succeeded by a Prime Minister of equal authority. If the despotism of a Sovereign enslaves genius and impairs courage, the evil is not so great as is imagined. But the despotism of a subaltern stifles even emulation, and produces the meanest and most complete of all servitudes. It was well that *Colbert* and *Louvois* were not checked by a Minister their master

master in the scope which they gave their genius. It would have been proper that a Minister their superior should have been in a situation to direct it. For *Lewis XIV* having no other knowledge of the objects of their department than what he derived from them, one might expect to see him continually importuned by those two rival Ministers, and successively governed by one or the other. He wanted some one with whom he might consult on the degree of preference which each demanded from him. The Sovereign of a moderate State, if he be a man of genius, may justly flatter himself that he shall have an eye on every thing: he may presume, from his application and discernment, that the jealousy and other passions of his Ministers will not impose upon him as to the true state of affairs, because he has it in his own power to be accessible to all who are able to inform him, and to all who may have the courage to offer him complaints. How superior soever may be the genius and talents of the Sovereign of a powerful Kingdom, he cannot reasonably promise himself so much, since most of these resources fail him. His eye is bewildered by the multitude of his subjects. His good or bad fortune determines the choice of those

those whom he takes for his coadjutors in the administration; and when the choice is made, whatever it be, it is almost impossible for him afterwards to make a better. All the avenues of the throne are guarded, as it were, by these first chosen; they carefully keep at a distance all whose concurrence they could not maintain. This ministerial policy is easier in *France* than any where else, birth being now less regarded there than ever, and great embassies, in which it is proper that the King should employ men of the highest abilities, always affording an honourable exile for those whose merit would make its way to the Monarch.

In this manner the small number of superior geniuses are removed, without having any hopes of return left; for being equally qualified for all parts, they appear formed for that which is assigned them, and nothing is more easy than to make the Prince believe, that it is the only one which suits them, or that which suits them the best: which dooms them to it for all their life. They whom their taste and studies have led to various particulars in which they excell, know, that, by offering themselves immediately to the Sovereign, they should make the Ministers
their

their enemies, to whom they would infallibly be referred, and who would be the inspectors and judges of their labour. But all who devote themselves to the public service, in a monarchical State, being determined to it by views of private interest, these chuse rather to be attached to a Minister, to whom they are sure of making themselves necessary, than to apply to the King, with whom, sooner or later, he would accomplish their ruin. To please their suspicious and jealous patron, they devote themselves to obscurity. Unknown to their master, they must not seem conscious of deserving to be known to him; and the Monarch, who has no idea of such a tractable ambition, is never able to distinguish them from other subalterns. With the utmost sincerity he thinks that the Clerks in the Offices of the Ministry are of no more value than what the Ministers give them, he refers to the latter all the honour and all the merit of industry; when once they have gained his confidence, they may indeed lose it, but there cannot be a rival in it to share it with them; and if they preserve it all their lives, he is persuaded, when death deprives him of them, that he sustains an irreparable loss. Those who are able to supply their
place,

place, having been constantly kept out of his sight, he is guided only by conjectures and hopes in the choice which he makes of a successor; he is often determined to it by a predilection for which he would find it difficult to account, and it is only by the tryal that he knows whether it has fallen well or ill.

ALL this doctrine, my Lord, is founded on constant experience, and the reign of *Lewis XIV* by no means contradicts it. † *D'Estrades* and * *d'Avaux*, two Statesmen of the first abilities, only corresponded with the Ministry for foreign affairs, of which they were much more capable of being at the head than those who kept them under their command in the embassies of *England* and *Holland*. Of so many subalterns of the greatest capacity, who had established, under *Colbert* and *Louvois*, the reputation of the Offices of war and the finances, no one was proposed to the King to succeed those Ministers. The Monarch,

† [Ambassador to *Holland*, and afterwards to *England* in 1661, where he distinguished himself by a contest for precedency with the *Spanish* Ambassador, which occasioned a dispute between their two Courts, and a submission from *Spain*.]

* [Ambassador to *James II* in *Ireland*, after his abdication, in 1689.]

who

who had inured himself to labour by labouring, thought that genius was acquired like talents. From esteem for the fathers, he gave them their sons for successors. This is just as if Admiral *Boscawen*, from regard for his chief pilot, had placed a young swabber, his son, at the helm of his ship. † *Seignelai*, scarce at years of manhood, had *Colbert's* place. Young * *Barbesieux* obtained that of the Marquess *de Louvois*, his father. *Pontchartrain* procured his son *Phelipeaux* to be received into his. These first offices of Government were given like places at Court or benefices in the Church, which are properly filled up when

† [*Voltaire* styles *Seignelai* "a bold enterprising Minister," and adds, that, "following the steps of his father *Colbert*, he greatly improved the marine of France." He commanded in person on board the fleet that bombarded *Genoa* in 1684, being "desirous to be at once a General and a Minister." He died in 1690. *Pontchartrain* succeeded him as Secretary of the Marine.]

* [When the King chose *Barbesieux* to succeed *Louvois* as Secretary at War, "I made your father a Minister," said he, "and I will make you one too." Age of *Lewis XIV.* The people, however, were highly dissatisfied with his Ministry, and the King too was so much disgusted, as to complain of his abusing his talents, and neglecting the public affairs for his pleasures, in a letter to the young man's uncle, the Archbishop of *Rheims*, of which *Voltaire* has given an extract.]

the

the title is conferred. For want of heirs of this kind, *Lewis* did not scruple to take men absolutely new. † *Chamillard*, who had never studied affairs of more importance than those of the *poor Damsels of St. Cyr*, whom the favour of *Madam de Maintenon* had made their Intendant, was set at the head of the Offices of War and of the Finances. The Monarch required from these Ministers of his creation only application and docility, and he assured them, that, by the help of his instructions, they would soon be able Statesmen. He believed what he said. The master and his scholars were mistaken; but what was more grievous, and inevitable, was, that *Lewis* imputed his faults to fortune, and that his Ministers, not being accountable to him for ill success, as they were only instruments in his hands, despised the advice and neglected the men, whose assistance would have made them more successful.

IF *Lewis XIV.* at the beginning of the

† [“*Chamillard* was more of the fine Gentleman than the Minister; but the modesty of his conduct, when he was Governor of *St. Cyr*, had pleased the King: however, notwithstanding his outward modesty and diffidence, he was so unhappy as to think his strength sufficient to support a weight, which *Colbert* and *Louvois* both together had borne with difficulty.” *Voltaire*.]

jealousy which prevailed between ~~Colbert~~ and *Louvois*, had appointed a Prime Minister, the emulation of those two men, who had certainly genius and great talents, would have been productive only of good effects. The impossibility of surprising the Monarch by the brilliancy of their operations, would have made them more moderate in their projects. This third, placed between the Sovereign and them, would have brought to the same distance from the throne such men as were most capable of balancing them in his esteem. The sight of these rivals would have inflamed their zeal and tempered their ambition. Having no more hopes of making themselves absolutely necessary, they would only have endeavoured to make themselves useful, and would have been careful of their slightest undertakings. Less certain of discovering and abusing the Monarch's foible, they would have sought rather to serve than to please him. *Louvois*, for instance, would have expected some objections in Council against the haughtiness with which he urged his master to pursue the *Dutch*†, against the suits which

† [In 1672, when the rigorous terms insisted on by *Louvois* inspired the *Dutch* with a desperate courage which saved them from destruction. "Their Depu-
ties,-

he caused to be carried on against the German Princes by the Chambers of reunion*, against the imprudent and barbarous diversion which he occasioned in the Palatinate† during the invasion of England by the Stadtholder of the Dutch, against his obstinacy in exhausting the patience of the Duke of Savoy‡. *Colbert*, in like manner, would have been apprehensive of them against the excess to which he carried the pomp and magnificence of the Court, against his immoderate patronage of commerce and

ties," says *Voltaire*, "were received by the Minister with haughtiness, and even with the insult of raillery."]

* [In 1679, when courts of jurisdiction were established at *Metz* and *Brisac* to reunite to the Crown of France all those territories which had been deemed appendages and dependencies on *Alsace*. The King of Spain and several Princes of the Empire were cited before this Tribunal, the Electors of *Cologne* and *Treves* were stripped of several Lordships, &c. *Hainault*, *sub. ann.*

† [In 1688, when, (for the second time in this reign) the *Palatinate* was laid waste, and its flourishing cities and villages reduced to ashes, to revenge the spirit of the Elector in forming the league of *Augsbourg* against France. "All Europe," says *Voltaire*, "looked on this destruction with horror, "and highly reflected on the *Marquess de Louvois*, "who, from a long Ministry, had contracted an inhumanity and hardness of heart."]

‡ [In 1690, when that Prince joined the allies, as he did also again in 1701.]

the arts at the expence of agriculture. *Seignelai*, *Barbesieux*, *Pbelipeaux*, rated at their just value, would have had the fate that attends the sons of a great military officer: they would have been employed, with some marks of distinction, in the department of their fathers, and they would have been allowed a glimpse of some certainty of attaining the same rank as they did, in case they should render themselves worthy of it. In short, a Prime Minister would not have encouraged *Lewis* in the error which made him chuse *Cbamillard*, and so long conceal from himself the dreadful effects of the incapacity of that son of fortune. Ignorant or flattering historians say, that the latter half of the reign of *Lewis XIV* was unfortunate. This is not the language of truth. The natural consequences of imprudence and misconduct are not styled misfortunes.

NEITHER a *Richelieu* nor a *Mazarin* would have suited *Lewis XIV*. That Prince had too much genius, and was too well acquainted with his rank, to bear a companion. Besides, a Prime Minister ought not to resemble those two who had the name of it, while that of Mayor of the palace, or Regent, was the only one which should have been given them. The prevailing opinion,

opinion, that the Prime Minister is the Governor of the King and Kingdom, is a misfortune to *France*. *Lewis XII* did not govern it less himself for having a Prime Minister. Cardinal *de Fournon* and Admiral *d'Annebaut* were the true Prime Ministers of *Francis I*, at the time when he reigned most by himself. The Duke of *Sully* was the same to *Henry IV*, who, nevertheless, guided the helm of Government. Cardinal *Fleury* had the power of *Mazarin* and *Richelieu*, without assuming the title of their post. A Prime Minister is the confident of the King and the State; he is, if one may so say, the lens in which are collected the various objects which the eye of the Prince ought to receive and contain.

A PERSON well acquainted with the private history of this age assures me, that *Philip of Orleans*, Regent of *France*, had a design to make the Prime Minister appear in his true colours, by creating a post of *Referendary of State*, which would have been annexed to the post of Chancellor, who would have been styled *Referendary of Justice*. Agreeably to the signification of the title, this first State-officer having, besides, pre-eminence of rank to the Ministers and Secretaries of State, would have been in

Council the constant reporter of the affairs of all the departments, without any other actual weight in the debates than the right of summing up the opinions, and of forming or resolving objections to the business. All the Secretaries of State, still the chiefs of their own offices, still the commanders in their own departments, would have had no obligation to the Referendary, except the giving him regularly, on certain days appointed, an account of their views and operations. He, having the whole digested in his office by some able and trusty hands, would have studied these extracts with the King, whose will would have determined what his Majesty wished to discuss in his Council, and what he reserved for his own examination with the Secretary of State of the department. This Referendary seems to me, in some measure, copied from the Pensionary of *Holland*; and I think, that its functions being well suited to the Monarchical constitution, that employment would soon have been adopted in all Monarchies.

WHETHER *Lewis XIV* knew, that the jealousy of his Ministers had often been an obstacle to the good of his service, or whether he thought to render the business more easy and expeditious by lessening their number, he united several departments under one chief.

This

This method, no doubt, is advantageous to the State, when the Prince's choice falls on men of superior abilities. Some departments which interfere with each other, or require their mutual assistance, do not well suit unless they are animated with the same spirit. But every thing grows worse and worse when this over-burthened chief is a man of indifferent talents. *Pontchartrain* had the Marine and the Finances on the death of *Seignelai*, and *Chamillard*, who succeeded him in the latter Office, succeeded also *Barbesieux* in the direction of that of War. The meanest observer would have formed a just presage of the war of 1701, on seeing *Chamillard* act alone in the two departments where *Colbert* and *Louvois* together had occasion for all their genius and all their love of business.

A MAN of small abilities and few attainments seldom does himself justice. Either he is not well known to himself, or he flatters himself with not being known to others; and the more need he has to be guided, the more he affects to avoid the company, to appear independent, of able men who might be suspected to guide him. Ministers of this stamp have generally reposed their confidence in persons who were still less valuable than they themselves. Able subalterns are abused and disregarded; which makes them frigid or

timid in the service, in which their pecuniary interest makes them blindly obey their principal. Very far from daring to propose any thing great and bold to a man who would make them responsible for the event, without giving them a share in the execution, without ascribing to them the honour of success, they have not even the courage to correct his mistakes. Whatever good and noble they sometimes venture to propose is received with a sneering applause, with an insulting irony, more difficult to digest than rebuffs: they see, in this Minister their superior, a proud, ignorant, and malicious despot, always in fault, and always on the watch to find where to fix the cause and the blame of untoward events. They content themselves with being in his hands instruments merely passive. It is certain, that, after having lost *Colbert* and *Louvois*, the only true Statesman whom *Lewis XIV* had among his Ministers was the Marquess de † *Torcy*. M. de * *Pom-pone* possessed some of the particulars which

† [Nephew of the great *Colbert*, Secretary of State, and Plenipotentiary at the conferences at the *Hague*, in 1709. He died in 1746. His Memoirs of the public transactions from the peace of *Ryswick* to that of *Utrecht* have since been published, and are highly esteemed for their elegance, candour, and sincerity.]

* [Appointed Secretary of State in 1696. He died in 1699.]

compose

compose that character, but he was a trifler and a devotee. § *Voisin* and † *Desmarets*, who succeeded *Chamillard*, were such as would neither make him regretted nor forgotten; they were, like him, inconsiderable.

THE Duke-Regent was very capable of making a good choice for all the departments. But his authority was precarious, and he never projected for the future but calumny accused him of hoping for it. Few men knew that Prince better than our Sir *Luke Schaub*, who was charged with the affairs of *England* in *France* during the negociations of the triple and quadruple alliance. I learned from that able and honest man a multitude of particulars which enable me to confound the rhapsodists whom I exhort you to despise. One scarce dares to name Cardinal † *Dubois*, who, nevertheless, had the

§ ["*Chamillard*, in February 1708, gave up the management of the war to M. *Voisin*, afterwards Chancellor, who had been Governor of the frontiers: Under him, however, the army was no better provided nor encouraged than before. He was a rigid and arbitrary man." *Voltaire*. This Minister died in 1717.]

† [Nephew to the illustrious *Colbert*: He succeeded *Chamillard* in the Finances in 1708.]

‡ ["Archbishop of *Cambray*, son to an apothecary of *Brive la Gaillard*. The sentiments, morals, and behaviour of this Minister are well known." *Voltaire*. He died in 1723."]

title of Prime Minister. For the honour of that high rank, his Eminence should be entirely forgotten. If he had not been vicious, the kingdom might have been greatly benefited by his irreligion. But he had no courage either in his heart or in his head; his ambition was only concupiscence.

AFTER him, the Duke of § *Bourbon*, Prince of the Blood, was placed at the head of affairs with the same title; and it was not long before he regretted his being placed there. The young King gave him Cardinal *de * Fleury* for a successor. This Minister successfully negotiated the union of *Lorraine* to the Crown. Some circumstances diminish, but do not deprive him of the merit of that important acquisition. M. *Chauvelin* is in the first rank of the Ministers whom he had under his direction: Except M. *Orry*, he is

* [A wise moderate man, grandfather to the present Prince of *Condé*.]

† ["If there ever was a happy mortal on earth, Cardinal *Fleury* was surely so. All his measures from 1726 to 1742 proved successful; and he preserved his intellectual faculties sound, clear, and capable of transacting business even to the 90th year of his age. . . His characteristic was moderation. He was simple and frugal in every particular, and always uniform in his behaviour: he had nothing high or elevated in his character; which was owing to his mildness, equanimity, and love of peace." *Voltaire*.]

the only one who acquired some reputation. He was at the head of Foreign affairs till 1736. Little perhaps would have been remembered of him, if it had not been for his quarrel with the Cardinal, and the disgrace which prevented his having the first place, to which, it is certain, he aspired.

Eclips'd as a chief, as a second he shone. This M. *Chauvelin* was a man of strong genius. His conduct gives room to suspect that his head was not so cool as a Statesman's ought to be. I have been assured, that he introduced himself into the Cardinal's favour by allowing him the honour of a Memoir, written by himself, on one of the grand objects of administration. Be that as it may, he made rapid advances in the confidence of the Prime Minister; and he established himself in it so firmly, that he rather seem'd his second than his subaltern. It was he who determin'd the Cardinal to the war of 1733. To the share which he took in the management of it, its success is even suppos'd to be owing. Believing himself necessary to the pacific old man†, he did not deign to conceal it from him. The latter was soon chagrined at dependence. It is generally believed, that, in order to free him-

[†. Peace is my dear delight, not *Fleury's* more.
Pope] self

self from it, he made the secret treaty of peace with the Emperor in 1735.

M. *CHAUVELIN* was not informed of the negociation till the moment when the preliminaries were going to be signed. He was enraged at the Cardinal for having concealed from him a matter of such importance, and foreseeing, from that reserve, the loss of his favour, he was so self-conceited as to hope to contend successfully with the Prime Minister. Certainly it was the interest of *France* not to deceive her allies, but, on the contrary, to assure herself of them and their confidence for the future, by faithfully observing the promise given to them not to treat without their knowledge. It is equally certain, that *France* had a right, from the circumstances and successes of her arms, to flatter herself with greater advantages than the acquisition of *Lorrain*. But these speculations would not have been sufficient to induce a man of tolerable judgment and prudence to thwart the measures taken in the King's name by a Prime Minister; this, however, M. *Chauvelin* ventured to do. He gave advice, it is said, to the Courts of *Madrid* and *Turin* of the negociation which the Cardinal had concealed from them with the utmost care. You may conceive the embarrassment in which the complaints and resentment of the two Courts involved

involved his Eminence. Being advanced too far to retire, he hazarded the losing them irretrievably by assuming towards them an air of haughtiness: they heard him notify, that the troops of *France* should join those of the Emperor to execute the treaty of *Vienna*. *Spain* yielded to arguments. But the King of *Sardinia*, who had received, at the time of the alliance, the strongest assurances of the acquisition of the *Milanese*, swore that he would remember the complaisance which was extorted from him. To his resentment we are indebted for his entering into the war of 1741.

M. *CHAUVELIN* was discovered by *Barjeac*, a confidential domestic of the Cardinal. His papers were intercepted, and delivered to the Prime Minister. No reasons of patriotism would have excused or extenuated the fault in the sight of a *Richelieu*, and the delinquent would have atoned for it with his life. Cardinal *Fleury*, more mild, was contented with removing from the Court his old confidant. Such an exile would have been a favour to a man who had been fond of living for himself. He was banished to one of the finest provinces of the Kingdom, with liberty to enjoy the society and amusements that suited his taste; and his disgrace depriving him only of his pensions, with the appointments of his places, he had enough

enough left to be the first Lord in the province. But a Minister, and especially a *French* Minister, dislikes every air but that of the Court. At the death of the Cardinal, concerning whom men's eyes began to be opened, M. *Chauvelin* thought he might again appear. In a long Memorial, in which he rudely treated the deceased, he made the best of his own intentions, genius, and talents. The ashes were as yet too hot to be stirred. It was observed to the Monarch, that the proceeding was ungenerous; and he was again disgusted with the vehement and revengeful Courtier. The Ministers in office, who perhaps were sensible that he was their superior, were on their guard against him: he passed the rest of his days in privacy, far from his family and his friends, with the mortifying idea, that the King and the State were not served so well as he thought himself able to serve them: the greatest number of votes were for him. He died one of the unhappiest men of his time. He had three sons, who were highly promising, whom he lost in the flower of their age. His wife, whom he was forced to receive as the companion of his exile, tormented him continually with her reproaches and complaints. No small firmness of mind is requisite to support this latter evil. He was not succeeded by a
Secretary

Secretary of State in the direction of Foreign affairs. The Duke de † *Noailles* was placed at the head of the Office, and he had under him Messrs. *de Chavigny* and *du Tillet*. The latter had negotiated the clandestine treaty of *Vienna*. The other has ever since been reckoned the ablest man that has been in that department. This disposition is ascribed to the intrigues of M. *de Belle-isle*, who had some views on this scrap of the spoils of the exile. It continued till that universal genius having attained the Cardinal's spirit, the chief of that Office had only the title left.

THE recommendation of the late Duke of *Orleans*, in 1742, if I am not mistaken, placed the Count d' *Argenson*, his Chancellor, and formerly Lieutenant-General of the Po-

† [“ This Nobleman commanded in *Catalonia* in the war of 1701, and afterwards filled the several departments of State. Though at the head of the Finances at the beginning of the Regency, when a General of the Army and Minister of State, he never left off cultivating literature; an example common among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, but in the present times, very seldom to be found in *Europe*. In the war of 1741, he commanded at *Dettingen*, where the battle was lost by the rashness of the Duke de *Gramont*, his nephew, afterwards killed at *Fontenoy*, in which battle Marshal de *Noailles* served as first aid-de-camp to Marshal *Saxe*, sacrificing his jealousy of command to the good of the State, and submitting himself to a General, who was a foreigner and a junior officer.” *Age of Lewis XV*, ch. 10 and 15.]
lice,

lice, at the head of the War-Office. He succeeded the *Marquess de Breteuil*, who had succeeded I know not whom. Those Secretaries at War, who have only some ordinary talents, are scarce known in time of peace but by the Court-calendars. The Count *d'Argenson* had soon interest enough to procure for his brother the *Marquess* the department of Foreign affairs. I have heard, that he would have been able to have done great things in any one of those of the interior administration. He was far from being successful in this. Mr. *Villettes*, the *English* Envoy at the Court of *Turin*, completely duped him in 1746. The fact was this. The King of *Sardinia*, distrusting the adherence of the Court of *Vienna* to the treaty of *Worms* of 1743, listened to the proposals which *France* made him of a separate peace; The Monarch gave the *French* agents to the 28th of *February* to bring him the ratification of the treaty, declaring, that if all was not finished that day, he should look upon the negotiation as void. The *Marquess* chusing to believe that this appointment of time was a small stroke of vanity of no consequence, took little care to be punctual to it. His courier sat out without knowing how much it behoved him to be expeditious; he stopped at *Lyons* to give a ball to the ladies. Mr. *Villettes*, who counted the
minutes

minutes and made good use of them, occasioned him some other impediments in the rest of his journey †. The courier arrived at *Rivoli* the 3d of *March*; and before that time, our able Minister, seconded by the Prince de *Dietrichstein*, Minister from the Court of *Vienna*, had procured the King's orders for the attack of *Asti*, the success of which raised the hopes of the Monarch, and confirmed him in the alliance.

THE Marquess d'*Argenson* vacated his place soon after. His successors are almost entirely forgotten down to the Abbé, now Cardinal, *de Bernis*. He is a man of quality, whom his small fortune determined to the ecclesiastical state. He is of *Dauphiny*, the country of *Bayard* and *Lesdiguières*. He joined to much wit and acquired knowledge a distinguished taste and talent for graceful poetry. Admitted into the best society in *Paris*, he seemed to aspire no farther than to be for a long time a man who kept good company. A small Abbey, which the Court had added to his Canonry of *Lyons*, would probably have filled his ambition; he extended his views and his hopes no farther; when some Ladies of his acquaintance, be-

† [This reminds one of the classical story of *Atalanta*, who, by stopping to take up the golden apples, artfully thrown in her way, lost the race.]

coming

coming, on a sudden, powerful at Court, encouraged him to apply himself to business. When he thought himself able to do credit to the recommendation of his patrons, he solicited employment; the Embassy to *Venice* was granted him, and without any other probation, he came to the head of the Office for Foreign affairs. His Ministry was short; but it makes, as one may say, an æra in the history of *Europe**, by the subversion, or at least the suspension, of the old system of rivalry between the Houses of *France* and *Austria*.

DIFFERENT reasons are assigned for the retreat of this Minister. Your Lordship will excuse me, for knowing none which I chuse to mention; the little anecdotes of that kind are discoveries of importance to Courtiers only. What I am allowed to give you as a fact, is, that the Cardinal has no reason to be ashamed of having brought himself into disgrace, that he might, if he pleased, have avoided it, that he must have foreseen it, and that he treated it like a man superior to petty

† *Sir Robert* is here a little inaccurate. *M. de Bernis* had a share in the treaty of *Versailles* 1756, only in quality of Plenipotentiary. *M. Rouillé* was then Secretary of State in the department of Foreign affairs, and that Minister had the chief management of the negociation.

ambition. He was with M. *de Stabremberg*, the Imperial Ambassador, when he received the King's letter, which thanked him for his services, and sent him to his Abbey of *St. Medard* at *Soissons*. After reading the fatal billet, he returned to the Count, without any alteration appearing in his looks; and breaking off the discourse which had engaged them on the affairs of the two Courts; "It is not to me, Sir," said he, *with an air of ease and cheerfulness*, "that you are any longer to explain yourself on these important subjects; see! here is my dismissal from his Majesty." He kept up with wonderful freedom an uninteresting conversation for some minutes, without seeming impatient for the Count's departure, who withdrew as much astonished at his firmness as at his fall.

CARDINAL *de Bernis* was succeeded by the Duke *de Choiseul*, whom his Embassies at *Rome* and *Vienna* recommended to the first employments of Government, and whom the alliance of *Versailles* required, in preference to all others, at the head of that Office. Few *French* Ministers acted at *Rome* with so much dignity, or rendered themselves so acceptable to the Imperial Court. He proceeded to the War department so soon as not to have furnished materials for his picture at the head
of

of that for Foreign affairs. As he is in full career, and in the finest part of his course, I exhort your Lordship to value him in proportion as he makes himself dreaded by our Ministers. It is very certain, that, while he continues in place, all the evil which befalls us must be imputed to him ‡.

‡ [To continue and complete the succession, it may be proper to add, that the Duke *de Choiseul*, and his relation the Duke *de Praslin*, being disgraced and banished from Court in *December 1770*, M. *de Boyne* succeeded to the Office of War, and the Duke *d' Aiguillon*, Lieutenant-General, &c. to that of Foreign affairs, in *June 1771*. This Nobleman was, during the last war, Intendant of the Provinces of *Normandy* and *Bretagne*, and as such commanded, in *September 1758*, the detachment which cut off the rear-guard of the *English* invading army in the bay of *St. Cas*. In *November 1759* he was appointed to the command of a large body of troops intended to be embarked at *Vannes*, for the invasion of *Ireland*, under convoy of Marshal *Conflans's* fleet. And after that fleet had been destroyed or dispersed by Sir *Edward Hawke*, mutual civilities and visits were interchanged between the *English* and *French* Commanders: In particular, Lord *Howe* demanded, as his prisoners, at the Duke's table, the crew of the *Heros*, a *French* ship, who, after striking to his Lordship, had escaped on shore in the night. "The fact," says Mr. *Dobson*, "was acknowledged, but the discussion of so nice a point was left to their respective Sovereigns." (See his *Annals of the War*, p. 109.) Though the arbitrary behaviour of the Duke *d' Aiguillon* to the Attorney-General and Parliament of *Bretagne*, &c. had created him many enemies, and occasioned strong complaints and resolutions against him

THE Count *de St. Florentin*, of the family of *Phelipeaux*, which reckons fourteen Secretaries of State in its genealogical tree, holds the fourth Office. His department is confined to interior affairs. But it is remarkably composed, as your Lordship will see in the historical Calendar. When a man of genius has the direction of it, it is equally extensive and fruitful in grand operations. Otherwise, every thing in it is reduced to matter of rote. The name of *St. Florentin* made much noise, in the time of letters *de cachet*, in the affairs of the Clergy and the Parliaments. But having considered the principal object of your Lordship's curiosity, it is sufficient to refer you for this department to your Calendar.

I am, &c.

him in the Parliament of *Paris*, he has had the address to triumph over all his opponents, and after involving in the disgrace intended for him the Parliament itself, and even all the Princes of the Blood (the Count *de la Marche* alone excepted) to emerge at once Prime Minister of *France*.

For the peculiar tenure of the Dutchy of *Aiguillon*, procured by Cardinal *Richelieu* for his niece, see p. 299. *Note*.]

END OF VOL. I.

